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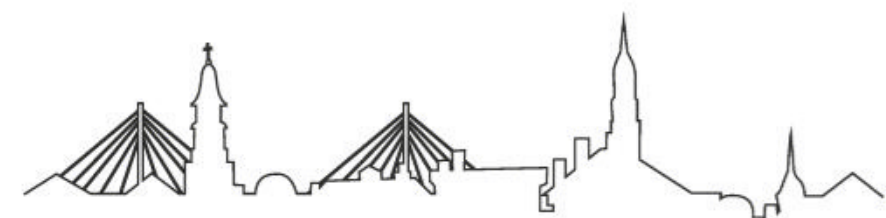
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HEYWARD - WASHINGTON HOUSE

Built in 1772, this Georgian-style double house was the town home of Thomas Heyward, Jr., one of the four South Carolina signers of the Declaration of Independence. Heyward, a patriot artillery officer, was captured when the British took Charleston in 1780.

FORT MOULTRIE

The original palmetto log fort was still incomplete when Commodore Sir Peter Parker and nine British warships attacked it on June 28, 1776. After an intense nine-hour battle the British were repelled. Charlestown was saved from occupation, and the fort was named in honor of its commander, Colonel William Moultrie.

THE OLD EXCHANGE AND PROVOST DUNGEON

Completed in 1771, it has witnessed some of the most important events in South Carolina history. During the American Revolution, British forces converted the bottom floor of the Exchange into a military prison known as the Provost, or dungeon. In 1791 city leaders entertained President George Washington here during his Southern Tour.

MIDDLETON PLACE

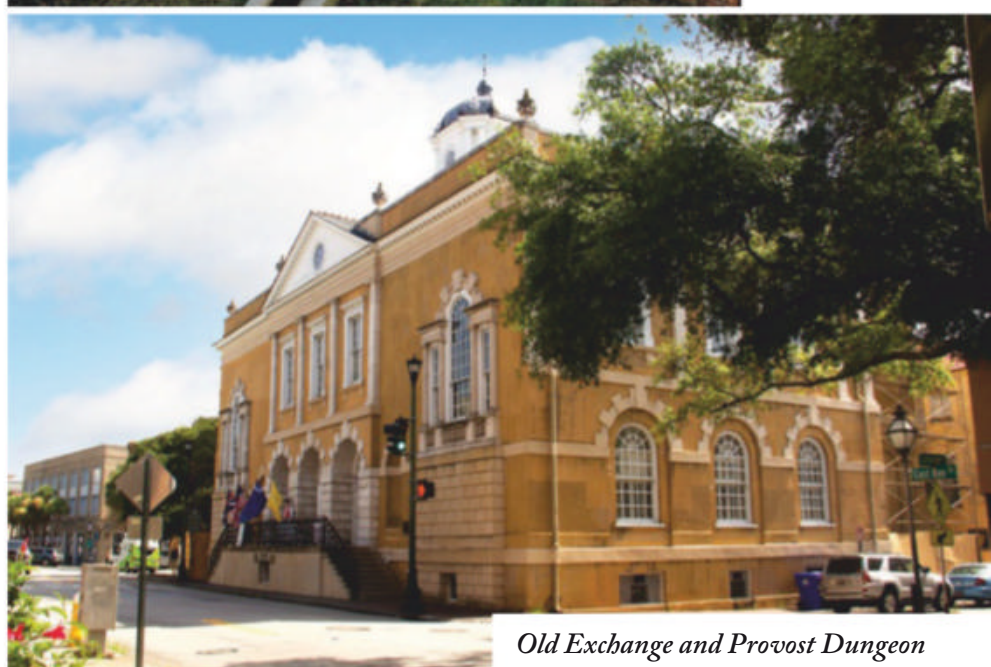
The ancestral home of Arthur Middleton, delegate to the Continental Congress of 1776 and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. As a defender of the city during the Siege of Charleston he was arrested by the British after the city fell in 1780.



Heyward-Washington House



Fort Moultrie



Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon



Middleton Place

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According to NBC news.com there are five scientifically-proven benefits of travel: improves health, relieves stress, enhances creativity, boosts happiness and lowers the likelihood of depression. When traveling, don't risk these great benefits worrying about losing or breaking expensive jewelry or messing with the hassles and costs of insurance. You're supposed to be destressing right?

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We’ve got experts

Cover: Yellowstone Lake is a shore bet if you’re an archaeologist searching for evidence of ancient humans. Photograph by **Andrew Geiger**



“Nailed all the elements we revere about da Vinci’s Mona Lisa.”

Dog Days

I enjoyed the article about canine cognition (“Evolution of a Friendship”). When I got to the sentence about half of all the spending on pets being embezzled and gambled away by cats, I roared with laughter. My cat, sitting next to me, chuckled and demanded to know why I was reading instead of making her dinner. Perhaps cats really are smarter than dogs.

— **Don Bonney** | Discovery Bay, California

I was charmed by the December cover photo by Shaina Fishman of Oakley, the Australian shepherd puppy. Oakley has a slight turn of the head, a coy sideways glance and just a hint of a smile: nailed all the elements we revere about da Vinci’s Mona Lisa.

— **George Hiner** | Nevada City, California

Every dog has its own personality and motivation. Certainly testing many dogs is required, but I will never believe that any definite conclusions can be reached about the human-dog bond because dogs really are too doggone complex.

— **Larry Wolf** | Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Hawaiian Revival

As a linguist specializing in documenting endan-

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gered languages and cultures, I thoroughly appreciated Alia Wong’s article (“Beyond Aloha”) on the revitalization of the Hawaiian language. I lived in Hawaii in the 1970s when the language was rarely heard or spoken. The renaissance of Hawaiian is wonderful; the language has a vibrant literary heritage. It’s good to see the number of speakers increasing. I also greatly appreciate *Smithsonian*’s use of the proper diacritics (‘okina “glottal stop” and kahakō “macron marking long vowels”). Hana maika‘i!

— **Neil H. Olsen** | Holladay, Utah

A language lost is no different from the loss of a species. Perhaps the lack of respect for other cultures in the economically developed world is partially responsible for diminishing linguistic diversity. What a noble effort the Harmans are engaged in maintaining a fuller and richer vision of reality.

— **Mark Meadows** | Green Valley, Arizona

Underwater Ecosystem

“Prairies of the Sea” is encouraging since seagrasses can be sown. That is good news for the planet. Humans are terrible stewards. We pollute and destroy, and greed is the major reason.

— **Cynthia Evans** | Lewisport, Kentucky

Side by Side

Finnish photographer Niko Luoma (“Look Again”) may have been inspired by Picasso’s *Le Rêve*, but he seems to have been more interested in his process of camera and filters than in the content of Picasso’s image. Luoma presents a light triangle that arrests the eye midline. Picasso begins with emotion and space. Light moves throughout the composition, as a color creating planes. Nothing stale in Picasso’s image.

— **Joyce Harris Mayer** | Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania

The Hendrix Vibe

Aside from his unrivaled musicianship, remarkable songwriting, and daring showmanship and attire, one of Jimi Hendrix’s great gifts (“An Electric Presence”) was his sense of humor. At Monterey Pop, he plays an outrageous, spur-of-the-moment snippet of the chorus to Sinatra’s recent “Strangers in the Night”—one-handed, no less!—during “Wild Thing,” which closed the set. It’s a wry moment, Hendrix’s



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way of saying to the crowd that by the end of the evening we'll no longer be strangers in the night, and our generation's music will take a great leap forward beyond our parents' button-down music tastes.

— **Fred Rudofsky** | Facebook

Good Jeans

I was truly amazed at the wearable condition of the 1880 jeans ("Every Wear"). Handwash them today and they'd be ready for hard work tomorrow. No rips and tears like jeans favored by today's fashionistas.

— **David Werdegart** | Naperville, Illinois

Classic Cards

I've long been fascinated by Christmas card art ("From Bambi to Bethlehem") and the artists who design it. It's nice to know some of Mr. Wong's beautiful Christmas cards have been reissued by his daughter and can be purchased on Etsy.

— **Kathy Young** | Little Rock, Arkansas

Corrections: "It Is Here. And It Is Hungry" (October 2020) mentioned that the invasive Khapra beetle had been found in warm weather climates from Arizona and New Mexico to Oklahoma and Texas. In fact, while the Khapra beetle has been intercepted at U.S. ports of entry, it has not been detected in the United States recently.

The map accompanying "The Deadly Shortage of Venom Antidote" (November 2020) wrongly indicated that the yellow-bellied sea snake is found in Eswatini, a landlocked country. The snake is found off the coast of neighboring Mozambique and South Africa.

In "An Electric Presence" (December 2020) we noted that Jimi Hendrix's vest resides at the National Museum of American History. In fact, it is part of the collection at the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

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The Executive Mansion

"Welcome to the White House" (November 2020) did an awesome job of showing just how much work goes on behind the scenes. Laura Bush's story not only describes the complicated workings of the White House, but is a real tribute to people whose faces we never see. It was particularly interesting to learn of those who have given their efforts for so many years.

— **Suzanne R. Bevan** | Fredericksburg, Virginia

In these difficult times, your story was an inspirational reminder that the White House is the people's house and is run by dedicated professionals.

— **Clare Murphy** | Kensington, Maryland



GREATNESS RESTORED

I FOUND MYSELF SPELLBOUND while reading "The Redemption of Rosa Bonheur" (November 2020). How I wish I had known about her when I was teaching the art history part of the humanities course offered in the high school where I taught for 35 years. I was always trying to find women who could be used as examples for my female students to show them that it isn't just HISstory, but also HERstory. I applaud the meticulous efforts of Katherine Brault to make Ms. Bonheur's chateau into a museum. Thank you so much for enlightening me on this wonderful artist and the brave lady who is trying to keep her legacy alive.

— **Linda Fuller-Cross** | Beattyville, Kentucky

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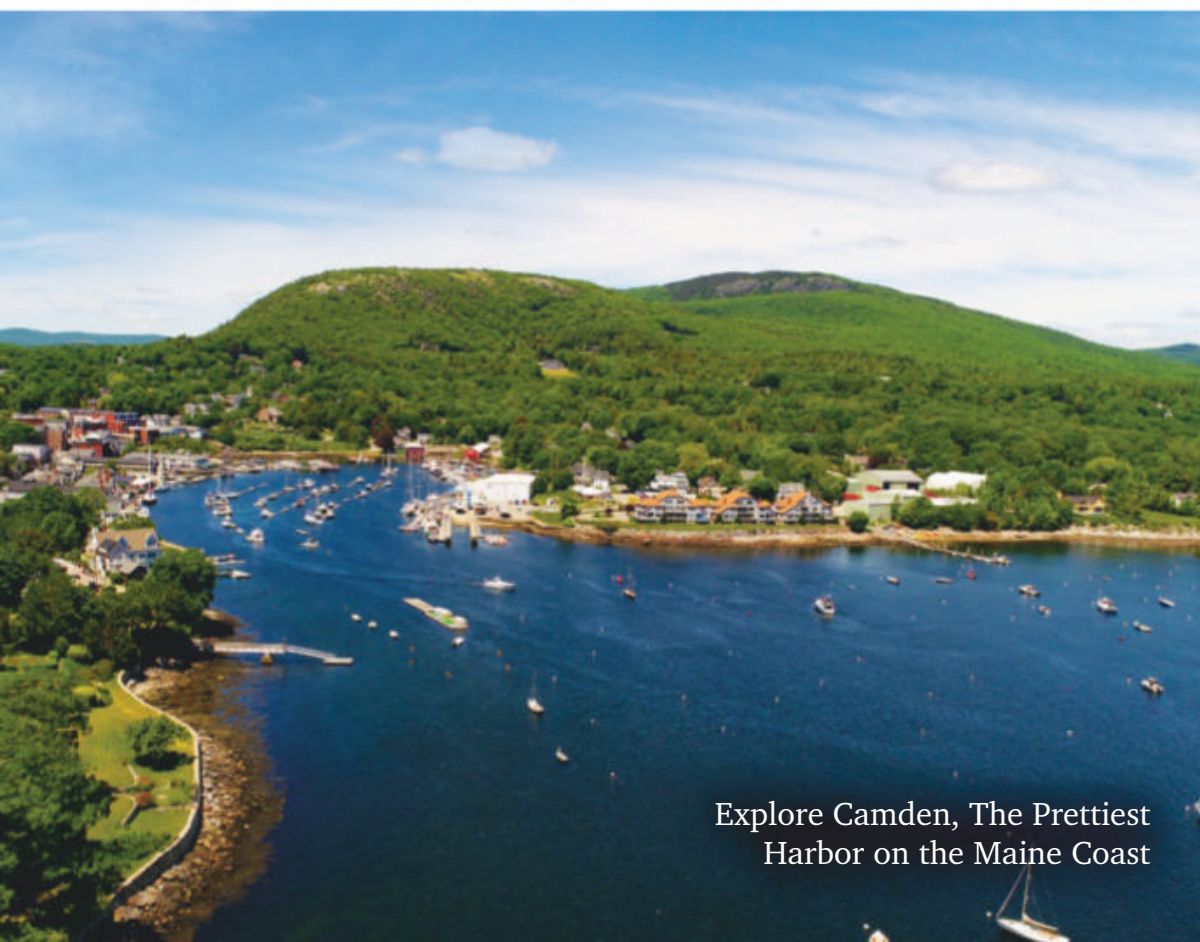
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In Museums, We Trust

AFTER A YEAR FRAUGHT WITH CHALLENGES, WE MUST BUILD ON OUR STRENGTHS FOR A COMMON PURPOSE

A **S MUCH AS THE NEW YEAR** is a time for new hopes and new resolutions, it also invites us to reflect. With the Smithsonian planning for the busy year ahead, I find myself looking back over my years at this institution,

at the moments that have shaped my professional and personal life. Two decades have passed since my team raced to finish the exhibition “The American Presidency,” opening just ahead of the inauguration of President George W. Bush. This February marks the fourth Black History Month since the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, for which I proudly served as founding director. And the year I’ve spent as Smithsonian Secretary has been one of striving and sprinting to respond to seismic shifts that have shaken the foundations of this country. Each of these experiences, fraught with challenges, has shown me how much we can accomplish when we come together for a common purpose.

> The carriage that Ulysses S. Grant rode in to his second inauguration is one of 900 items in the exhibition “The American Presidency.”

The past 12 months, especially, have been a lesson in how the Smithsonian can serve our public. We can grow our digital capabilities to reach new audiences. We can work closely with teachers, students and families to provide invaluable educational support. We can marshal our expertise and our collections to facilitate productive conversations around the most divisive issues.

In moments of crisis, people turn to institutions they trust. This past year demonstrated how important it is to protect our institutions, and in turn, how those institutions must work to help their communities. The challenges of a pandemic spurred the Smithsonian to collaborate more closely than ever with museum colleagues across the globe, with school districts across the country, and with leaders in local communities. Time and time again, I have been humbled by the faith they put in us.

Among all the resources that we have at our disposal—historic collections, groundbreaking research, deep scholarly expertise—perhaps our most precious is public trust. For many years, museums have ranked among the nation’s most trusted institutions. As confidence in other public-facing institutions falters, museums remain safe havens. The public counts on us to safeguard culture, heritage and knowledge.

I am inspired by staff members across the Institution who are helping our audiences endure hardship and pursue hope. Together with you, our readers, and the entire Smithsonian community, I look forward to a creative and fulfilling new year. ♦



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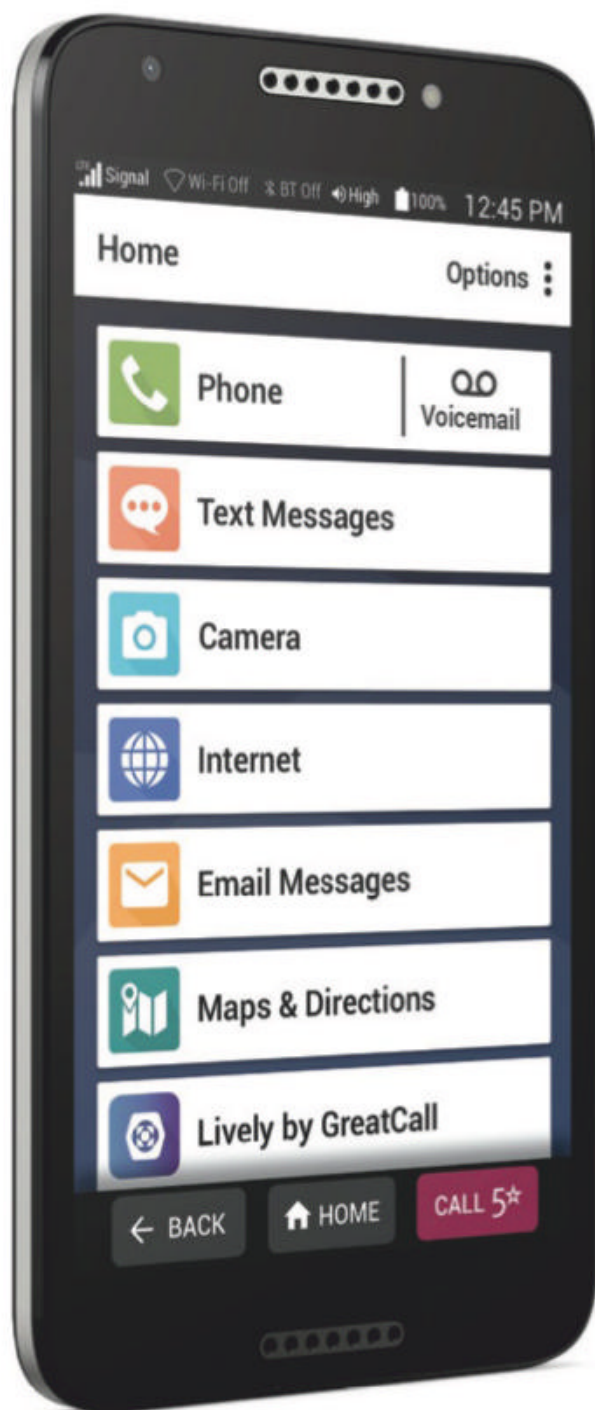
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THE PAST IS

prologue

By
Kate Wheeling

Photograph by
Dan Saelinger

AMERICAN ICON

Veteran food critic Florence Fabricant has called peanut butter “the pâté of childhood.”

Going Nuts

The bizarre sanitarium staple that would become a spreadable obsession



ORTH AMERICANS WEREN'T THE FIRST to grind peanuts—the Inca beat us to it by a few thousand years—but peanut butter reappeared in the modern world because of an American, the doctor, nutritionist and cereal pioneer John Harvey Kellogg, who filed a patent for a proto-peanut butter in 1895. Kellogg's "food compound" involved boiling nuts and grinding them into an easily digestible paste for patients at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, a spa for all kinds of ailments. The original patent didn't specify what type of nut to use, and Kellogg experimented with almonds as well as peanuts, which had the virtue of being cheaper. While modern peanut butter enthusiasts would likely find Kellogg's compound bland, Kellogg called it "the most delicious nut butter you ever tasted in your life."

A Seventh-Day Adventist, Kellogg endorsed a plant-based diet and promoted peanut butter as a healthy alternative to meat, which he saw as a digestive irritant and, worse, a sinful sexual stimulant. His efforts and his elite clientele, which included Amelia Earhart, Sojourner Truth and Henry Ford, helped establish peanut butter as a delicacy. As early as 1896, *Good Housekeeping* encouraged women to make their own with a meat grinder, and suggested pairing the spread with bread. "The active brains of American inventors have found new economic uses for the peanut," the *Chicago Tribune* rhapsodized in July 1897.

Before the end of the century, Joseph Lambert, an employee at Kellogg's sanitarium who may have been the first person to make the doctor's peanut butter, had invented machinery to roast and grind peanuts on a larger scale. He launched the Lambert



▲
"It's the Great Depression that makes the PB&J the core of childhood food," food historian Andrew F. Smith has said.

Food Company, selling nut butter and the mills to make it, seeding countless other peanut butter businesses. As manufacturing scaled up, prices came down. A 1908 ad for the Delaware-based Loeber's peanut butter—since discontinued—claimed that just 10 cents' worth of peanuts contained six times the energy of a porterhouse steak. Technological innovations would continue to transform the product into a staple, something Yanks couldn't do without and many a foreigner considered appalling.

By World War I, U.S. consumers—whether convinced by Kellogg's nutty nutrition advice or not—turned to peanuts as a result of meat rationing.

Government pamphlets promoted "meatless Mondays," with peanuts high on the menu. Americans "soon may be eating peanut bread, spread with peanut butter, and using peanut oil for our salad," the *Daily Missourian* reported in 1917, citing "the exigencies of war."

The nation's food scientists are nothing if not ingenious, and peanut butter posed a slippery problem that cried out for a solution. Manufacturers sold tubs

of peanut butter to local grocers, and advised them to stir frequently with a wooden paddle, according to Andrew Smith, a food historian. Without regular effort, the oil would separate out and spoil. Then, in 1921, a Californian named Joseph Rosefield filed a patent for applying a chemical process called partial hydrogenation to peanut butter, a method by

“
THE ACTIVE BRAINS OF AMERICA'S INVENTORS HAVE FOUND NEW ECONOMIC USES FOR THE PEANUT.
”



Sustainable

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER'S RESEARCH
WAS ABOUT MORE THAN PEANUTS

By Emily Moon

which the main naturally occurring oil in peanut butter, which is liquid at room temperature, is converted into an oil that's solid or semisolid at room temperature and thus remains blended; the practice had been used to make substitutes for butter and lard, like Crisco, but Rosefield was the first to apply it to peanut butter. This more stable spread could be shipped across the country, stocked in warehouses and left on shelves, clearing the way for the national brands we all know today. The only invention that did more than hydrogenation to cement peanut butter in the hearts (and mouths) of America's youth was sliced bread—introduced by a St. Louis baker in the late 1920s—which made it easy for kids to construct their own PB&Js. (In this century, the average American kid eats some 1,500 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches before graduating from high school.)

Rosefield went on to found Skippy, which debuted crunchy peanut butter and wide-mouth jars in the 1930s. In World War II, tins of (hydrogenated) Skippy were shipped with service members overseas, while the return of meat rationing at home again led civilians to peanut butter. Even today, when American expats are looking for a peanut butter fix, they often seek out military bases: They're guaranteed to stock it.

But while peanut butter's popularity abroad is growing—in 2020, peanut butter sales in the United Kingdom overtook sales of the Brits' beloved jam—enjoying the spread is still largely an American quirk. "People say to me all the time, 'When did you know that you had fully become an American?'" Ana Navarro, a Nicaraguan-born political commentator, told NPR in 2017. "And I say, 'The day I realized I loved peanut butter.'"

Though the United States lags behind China and India in peanut harvest, Americans still eat far more of the spread than the people in any other country: It's a gooey taste of nostalgia, for childhood and for American history. "What's more sacred than peanut butter?" Iowa Senator Tom Harkin asked in 2009, after a salmonella outbreak was traced back to tainted jars. By 2020, when Skippy and Jif released their latest peanut butter innovation—squeezeable tubes—nearly 90 percent of American households reported consuming peanut butter.

The ubiquity of this aromatic spread has even figured in the nation's response to Covid-19. As evidence emerged last spring that many Covid patients were losing their sense of smell and taste, Yale University's Dana Small, a psychologist and neuroscientist, devised a smell test to identify asymptomatic carriers. In a small, three-month study of health care workers in New Haven, everyone who reported a severe loss of smell using the peanut butter test later tested positive. "What food do most people in the U.S. have in their cupboards that provides a strong, familiar odor?" Small asks. "That's what led us to peanut butter." ♦

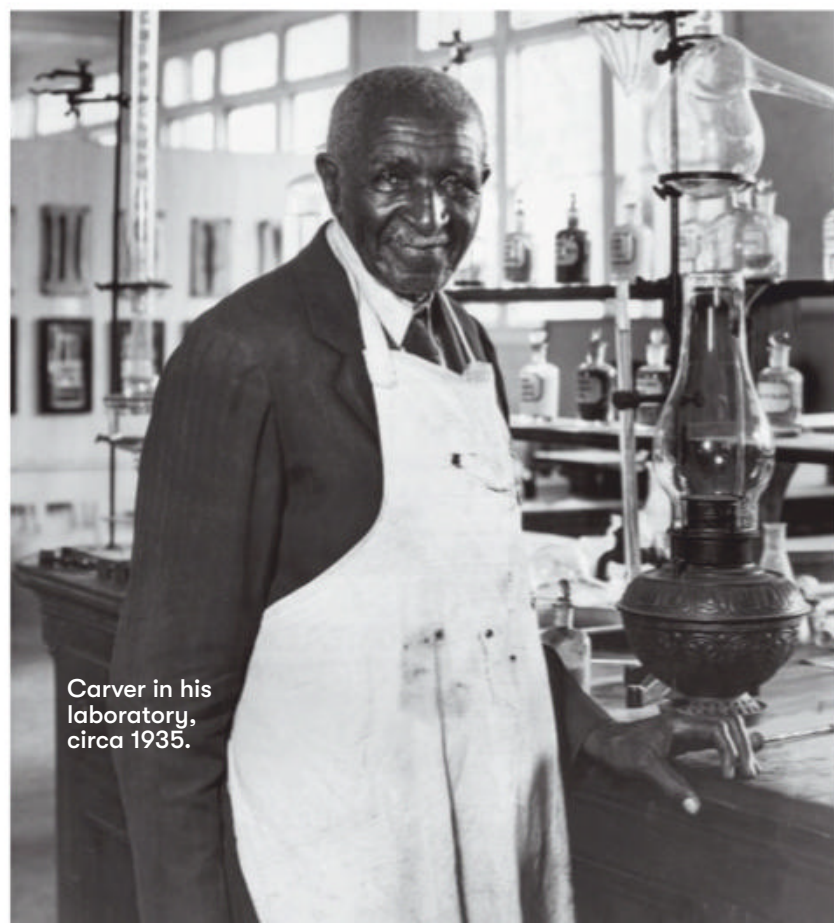
NO AMERICAN IS MORE closely associated with peanuts than George Washington Carver, who developed hundreds of uses for them, from Worcestershire sauce to shaving cream to paper. But our insatiable curiosity for peanuts, scholars say, has obscured Carver's greatest agricultural achievement: helping black farmers prosper, free of the tyranny of cotton.

Born enslaved in Missouri around 1864 and trained in Iowa as a botanist, Carver took over the agriculture department at the Tuskegee Institute, in Alabama, in 1896. His hope was to aid black farmers, most of whom were cotton sharecroppers trapped in perpetual debt to white plantation owners. "I came here solely for the benefit of my people," he wrote to colleagues on his arrival.

He found that cotton had stripped the region's soil of its nutrients, and yet landowners were prohibiting black farmers from planting food crops. So Carver began experimenting with plants like peanuts and sweet potatoes, which could replenish the nitrogen that cotton leached and, grown discreetly, could also help farmers feed their families. In classes and at conferences and county fairs, Carver showed often packed crowds how to raise these crops.

Since his death in 1943, many of the practices Carver advocated—organic fertilizer, reusing food waste, crop rotation—have become crucial to the sustainable agriculture movement. Mark Hersey, a historian at Mississippi State University, says Carver's most prescient innovation was a truly holistic approach to farming.

"Well before there was an environmental justice movement, black environmental thinkers connected land exploitation and racial exploitation," says Hersey. A true accounting of American conservation, he says, would put Carver at the forefront. ♦



Carver in his laboratory, circa 1935.

MASTER PIECES

Spirituality, culture and memory come together in collages by a curator and artist



AS A LEADING SCHOLAR and curator of African American art, David Driskell, who died of Covid-19 last April at 88, worked to carve a place in the mainstream for generations of artists who, he said, “wanted to prove to a skeptical world that they were as good as anybody.” As an artist himself, Driskell created exuberant paintings and richly detailed collages steeped in black art history. In February, some 60 of his works will go on view in his first posthumous

Woman With Flowers, oil and collage on canvas, 1972. A celebration of black beauty, the work alludes to both African sculpture and African American quilting.

retrospective, at Atlanta’s High Museum of Art. Driskell’s seven-decade career stretched from the dawn of the civil rights movement to our current era of political polarization, and social justice themes, perhaps inevitably, run through his canvases. Still, says Julie McGee, the show’s guest curator, Driskell understood the importance of seeking the beautiful and divine despite chaos and strife. As he once put it, “art is a priestly calling . . . that shows us life can be so beautiful.” ♦

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Coda for the Kid

His pioneering trombone work put New Orleans jazz on the map, but only now is Kid Ory getting the encore he deserves

Ory in November 1945, during his comeback after working as a janitor.

I F YOU WERE SAUNTERING through the packed-dirt streets of back-of-town New Orleans in the 1910s, anywhere between Storyville and Gert Town, chances are you would have encountered several brass bands blowing a new flavor of music from wagons that promoted upcoming performances. But none of them blew like Kid Ory's band. Ory wowed onlookers

by stretching his trombone slide over the tailgate and blasting competing groups with his signature goodbye tune, "Do What Ory Say," as the crowd cheered. "Kid Ory's band would cut all of the bands during his tailgate advertising," Louis Armstrong marveled in a 1970 interview.

The origins of jazz have always been murky. While the early 1900s bandleader and cornetist Buddy Bolden is often credited with pioneering ➔

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the “hot” improvisational brass music that became jazz, Ory is largely remembered as a sideman for stars like Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton. His status as one of the most pivotal bandleaders in jazz, who helped popularize the trombone glissando—a central element of New Orleans jazz—has receded from the popular memory. Yet it was Ory who prepared the ground for the work of nearly all subsequent New Orleans jazz musicians, and who arguably brought jazz into its modern form through his charismatic, innovative playing and his dogged, business-minded bandleading. Remembering Ory as a mere sideman, says John McCusker, author of a 2012 biography of Kid Ory, *Creole Trombone*, is “like talking about Duke Ellington as a pianist. Ory’s instrument really was the band.”

But jazz’s greatest glissandeur is now being remembered more fully. For the first time, the public can now visit Woodland Plantation in LaPlace, Louisiana, the former 1,882-acre sugar cane operation 29 miles up the Mississippi River from New Orleans where Edward “Kid” Ory was born to Ozeme Ory and Octavie Devezin on Christmas Day 1886. As it happened, Ory’s childhood home was also where the largest uprising of enslaved people in U.S. history originated, the famous revolt of 1811.

Young Ory, who lived in the estate’s former slave quarters with his parents and siblings, had a deep interest in music, and before he picked up an instrument, he and his friends would sing in quartets. “We would stand on a bridge at night and hum different tunes with different harmonies,” Ory recalled. “It was dark and no one could see us, but people could hear us singing and they’d bring us a few ginger cakes and some water. . . . It was good ear training.”

Inspired by the brass bands that performed at settlements up and down the river, Ory and his



Ory and his signature sextet blowing hot at the Beverly Cavern in Los Angeles, circa 1948.

Orleans and paid \$67 for his first trombone—nearly \$2,000 in today’s money. It was a shorter model with valves, like those on a trumpet, instead of the longer slide that would soon become synonymous with New Orleans jazz.

With the instrument in hand, he stopped by his sister’s house near Jackson Avenue, which happened to be near a popular musicians’ hangout. Buddy Bolden walked by and heard Ory play. “I was running over the horn . . . and he stopped and rapped on the door,” Ory recalled in a 1957 interview. Bolden offered him a job on the spot.

Though tempted, Ory couldn’t move to New Orleans; he’d promised his parents before they died that he would stay in LaPlace to take care of his younger sisters. Still, he and his bandmates—by 1911 they were known simply as Kid Ory’s band—began making regular trips to the Crescent City. They had befriended—and learned from—Bolden’s group, whose loose, improvisational style was described as “hot,” as opposed to other brass bands that played to sheet music, including Bolden’s rival John Robichaux.

Ory saw how Bolden had adapted his style of play-

“**HE IS AN ARTIST, THE GREATEST HOT TROMBONE OF ALL TIME.**”

friends began playing on homemade cigar-box guitars, banjos, violins and a soapbox bass strung with fishing line and metal wire. On occasion, while attending a brass band concert, he would pick up an unused trombone while a group was on break and start working out its mysteries. After he made serious money in 1905, likely from that year’s sugar cane harvest, Ory traveled to Werlein’s for Music in New

ENJOY A VARIETY of Kid Ory’s playful, colorful album covers at Smithsonianmag.com/kidory



ing from Holy Roller churches, where attendees danced, clapped and moved however the spirit directed them. But to Ory, Bolden played too loud and brash, while Robichaux was too formal. “Bolden was very rough,” said Ory. “You have to give him credit for starting the ball rolling. . . . But he really wasn’t a musician. . . . He was a gifted player with effect but no tone.” So Ory went about creating music that balanced Bolden’s brashness with Robichaux’s professionalism. “[Ory] realized that the way to get the good jobs and get the money—read: get the jobs with the white folks—was to show up, look good, be on time, do all the stuff that John Robichaux did to lock up all that white audience, but play the hot stuff,” says McCusker. Ory would show other musicians in New Orleans how to make a living playing hot music.

When Ory permanently moved his six-piece band to New Orleans, in 1910, he had a new weapon, which became a defining part of his sound:

a slide trombone. As you can hear on the 1922 hit “Ory’s Creole Trombone” and innumerable other songs throughout his catalog, the slide enabled him to play glissando and “smear” between notes, which gave his music the boozy sound still associated with New Orleans jazz. Ory was not the first to play a glissando on a trombone, but he was surely one of the most dazzling—and influential.

In 1913, a teenage Armstrong began showing up at Ory’s performances, much as Ory had followed Bolden’s shows eight years earlier, and earned a spot in Ory’s band playing cornet in 1918. But the prohibition of alcohol in Louisiana in 1919, preceded by enforcement of the Wartime Prohibition Act in 1918 and the closing of the Storyville red-light district in 1917, changed the landscape for jazz musicians in New Orleans.

Moving to Los Angeles, where the police seemed less determined to crack down on nightclubs, Ory made history. In 1922, he recorded “Ory’s Creole Trombone” with a new band he’d assembled of fellow displaced New Orleanians. It was the first jazz recording made by black musicians from New Orleans, and it’s an ensemble piece from beginning to end, a burst of polyphony rather than a band supporting a soloist, with Ory’s glissando touches delivering the hook. The tune “offers a rare glimpse into the origins of New Orleans jazz and a remarkable insight to this

music’s durability and universal appeal,” David Sager, a musician and jazz historian, said in 2005 when the Library of Congress selected the song for the National Recording Registry, which recognizes exemplars of the nation’s musical heritage.

The song was among half a dozen Ory recordings on three 78 rpms released at once. The entire first pressing of 5,000 records sold out and gave Ory a new audience. Today, an original copy of “Ory’s Creole Trombone” fetches \$1,000. The tune and its style of instrumentation inspired groups across the country—and ushered Ory and his signature sound into the Hollywood party circuit while also furnishing gigs down the coast in San Diego and Tijuana.

Following invitations from Armstrong, Morton and Joseph “King” Oliver, in 1925 Ory moved to Chicago, where jazz had recently taken off. Ory recorded sides with Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five and gigged across Chicago for a couple of years, including at mob haunts like the Plantation, where he rubbed shoulders with Al Capone. But recording opportunities slowed in the late 1920s, and the trend toward big-band swing arrangements didn’t favor the music Ory had spent the previous decade and a half playing; he returned to Los Angeles just before the stock market crash of 1929. Paying gigs were scarce during the Great Depression, and in 1933 one of the most important American musicians of the early 20th century put down his trombone and picked up a mop, working as a janitor for the Sante Fe Railway.

In the 1940s, jazz fans, turned off by the less danceable bebop style gaining popularity, brought New Orleans jazz back into vogue. Crucially, in 1942, Ory received \$8,000 in back royalties for “Muskrat” ➔

The new museum at the 1811 Kid Ory Historic House offers exhibits about the jazzman’s life—and the 1811 uprising that began on the plantation.



Ramble”—a tune he’d written and recorded with Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five in 1926. (Ory’s friend and fellow jazzman Barney Bigard, who had experience dealing with rights and royalties, helped him track down the publisher.) The windfall helped ease him back into the Los Angeles music scene.

Ory’s new sextet, based on his classic-era bands, dazzled critics and fans, including Orson Welles, who hired Ory to lead the band on his CBS radio show, “The Orson Welles Almanac,” in 1944. Music writers rhapsodized about Ory’s comeback. “The most important event of 1945 in jazz—speaking of public rather than recorded performance—is the extended run of Kid Ory’s Band in Hollywood,” Rudi Blesh wrote in *The Jazz Record* in October 1945. “Ory is the Ory of old—he is an artist, the greatest hot trombone of all time.”

Ory continued to perform in Los Angeles clubs until retiring in 1966. He visited New Orleans one last time, in 1971, to perform at the second annual

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, which now attracts half a million people to the city each spring. He died of pneumonia in 1973 at age 86 in Honolulu.

More than a century after his birth, the world Ory grew up in isn’t hard to spot if you know where to look. A neighborhood of modest wood-frame and mobile homes called Woodland Quarters sits on the site of the former slave dwellings where Ory lived as a boy in Louisiana.

Across U.S. Highway 61, green stalks of ripe sugar cane tower six feet high in fields that had once been part of the plantation. The derelict buildings around the corner from Woodland on LaPlace’s Main Street are what’s left of the overseer’s house and the warehouse for the plantation store, where Ory once ordered a banjo. And on the wall of a barn behind the house, a stark reminder of the world Ory escaped

remains crudely painted on the wall: *Notice. No loafers allowed in here.* ♦

Fascinating Women

THEY MAY NOT BE HOUSEHOLD NAMES, BUT THEY WERE TRUE JAZZ PIONEERS

By Ted Scheinman



CORA “LOVIE” AUSTIN 1887-1972

Born in Tennessee, Austin led the studio band at Paramount Records in Chicago throughout the 1920s. A virtuoso of jazz arranging, she orchestrated, performed and conducted for more than 100 recordings by the likes of Bessie Smith, Alberta Hunter, Louis Armstrong and Kid Ory. “She was a greater talent than many of the men of this period,” the pianist Mary Lou Williams, who was deeply influenced by Austin, once said.



UNA MAE CARLISLE 1915-1956

The brilliant singer and pianist toured Europe in the late 1930s, “charming the aristocracy with her witty stylings,” says Hannah Grantham, a Smithsonian musicologist. Of African and Native American descent, Carlisle was the first black woman to have a composition appear on a Billboard chart (“Walkin’ by the River,” 1941) and the first black American to host a national radio show (“The Una Mae Carlisle Radio Show” on WJZ-ABC).



ERNESTINE “TINY” DAVIS C. 1909-1994

The Memphis-born vocalist and trumpeter enjoyed a decades-long career, touring with many bands during the golden age of jazz and leading the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, a racially integrated band of 17 women that defied Jim Crow laws to tour the South in the 1940s. Louis Armstrong was so impressed with Davis’ playing that he reportedly tried to hire her away from the Sweethearts; Davis turned him down.

DYER JONES C. 1890-UNKNOWN

Though she was never recorded, and many of the details of her life are lost to history, Jones, who played the trumpet, exerted a major influence on early jazz, Grantham says. In the 1910s, she led a circus band around the country. Among the aspiring female musicians she mentored were runaways from a Charleston, South Carolina, orphanage, the future “Queen of the Trumpet” Valaida Snow and Jones’ own daughter Dolly, who made history in 1926 as the first female trumpeter to record a jazz record. Jones even formed a family trio, with her husband on saxophone and Dolly on trumpet.

DOROTHY DONEGAN 1922-1998

The Chicago native, who studied at the Chicago Conservatory, could play boogie, bebop and classical. In 1943, Donegan was the first black performer to hold a concert bill at Chicago’s Orchestra Hall, performing Rachmaninoff and Grieg in the first act and jazz in the second.



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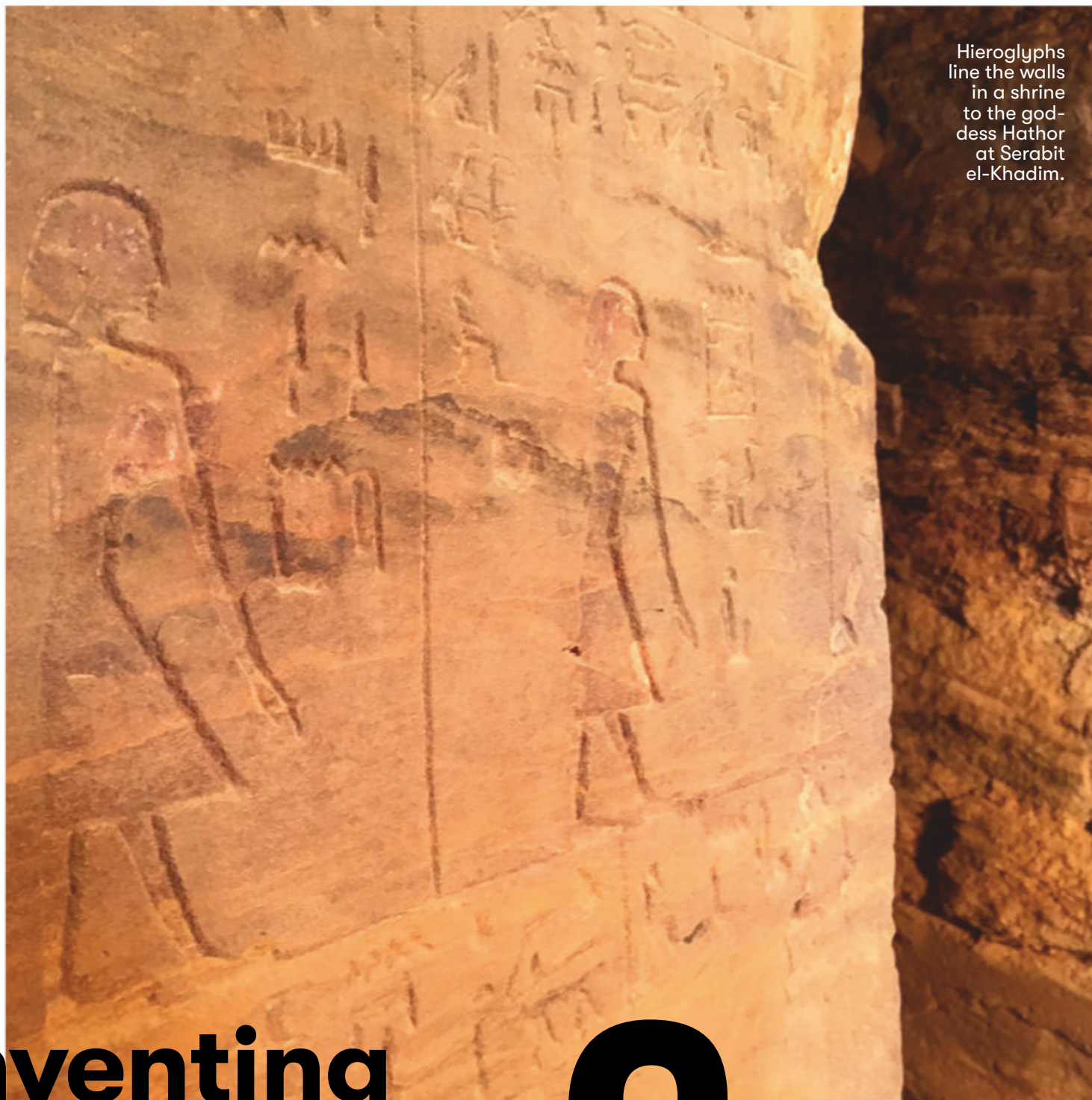


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Hieroglyphs line the walls in a shrine to the goddess Hathor at Serabit el-Khadim.

Inventing the Alphabet

New scholarship points to a paradox of historic scope: Our writing system was devised by people who couldn't read

C

ENTURIES BEFORE MOSES wandered in the “great and terrible wilderness” of the Sinai Peninsula, this triangle of desert wedged between Africa and Asia attracted speculators, drawn by rich mineral deposits hidden in the rocks. And it was on one of these expeditions, around 4,000 years ago, that some mysterious

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Egyptians to reach, as the presence of a temple right at the top shows. When I visited in 2019, I looked out over the desolate, beautiful landscape from the summit and realized I was seeing the same view the inventors of the alphabet had seen every day. The temple is built into the living rock, dedicated to Hathor, the goddess of turquoise (among many other things); stelae chiseled with hieroglyphs line the paths to the shrine, where archaeological evidence indicates there was once an extensive temple complex. A mile or so southwest of the temple is the source of all ancient interest in this area: embedded in the rock are nodules of turquoise, a stone that symbolized rebirth, a vital motif in Egyptian culture and the color that decorated the walls of their lavish tombs. Turquoise is why Egyptian elites sent expeditions from the mainland here, a project that began around 2,800 B.C. and lasted for over a thousand years. Expeditions made offerings to Hathor in hopes of a rich haul to take home.

In 1905, a couple of Egyptologists, Sir William and Hilda Flinders Petrie, who were married, first excavated the temple, documenting thousands of votive offerings there. The pair also discovered curious signs on the side of a mine, and began to notice them elsewhere, on walls and small statues. Some signs were clearly related to hieroglyphs, yet they were simpler than the beautiful pictorial Egyptian script on the temple walls. The Flinders Petries recognized the signs as an alphabet, though decoding the letters would take another decade, and tracing the source of the invention far longer.

“**IT IS CLEAR THAT WHOEVER WROTE THESE INSCRIPTIONS IN THE SINAI DID NOT KNOW HIEROGLYPHS.**”

Goldwasser calls the sphinx discovered at Serabit “the Rosetta stone of the alphabet.”



The Flinders Petries brought many of the prizes they had unearthed back to London, including a small, red sandstone sphinx with the same handful of letters on its side as those seen in the mines. After ten years of studying the inscriptions, in 1916 the Egyptologist Sir Alan Gardiner published his transcription of the letters and their translation: An inscription on the little sphinx, written in a Semitic dialect, read “Beloved of Ba’alat,” referring to the Canaanite goddess, consort of Ba’al, the powerful Canaanite god.

“For me, it’s worth all the gold in Egypt,” the Israeli Egyptologist Orly Goldwasser said of this little sphinx when we viewed it at the British Museum in late 2018. She had come to London to be interviewed for a BBC documentary about the history of writing. In the high-ceilinged Egypt and Sudan study room lined with bookcases, separated from the crowds in the public galleries by locked doors and iron staircases, a curator brought the sphinx out of its basket and placed it on a table, where Goldwasser and I marveled at it. “Every word we read and write started

with him and his friends.” She explained how miners on Sinai would have gone about transforming a hieroglyph into a letter: “Call the picture by name, pick up only the first sound and discard the picture from your mind.” Thus, the hieroglyph for an ox, *aleph*, helped give a shape to the letter “a,” while the alphabet’s inventors derived “b” from the hieroglyph for “house,” *bêt*. These first two signs came to form the name of the system itself: alphabet. Some letters were borrowed from hieroglyphs, others drawn from life, until all the sounds of the language they spoke could be represented in written form.

The temple complex detailed evidence of the people who worked on these Egyptian turquoise excavations in the Sinai. The stelae that line the paths record each expedition, including the names and jobs of every person working on the site. The bureaucratic nature of Egyptian society yields, today, a clear picture of the immigrant labor that flocked to Egypt seeking work four millennia ago. As Goldwasser puts it, Egypt was “the America of the old world.” We can read about this arrangement in Genesis, when Jacob, “who dwelt in the land of Canaan”—that is, along the Levant coast, east of Egypt—traveled to Egypt to seek his fortune. Along with farmers like Jacob, other Canaanites ended up mining for the Egyptian elites in Serabit, some 210 miles southeast by land from Memphis, the seat of pharaonic power.

Religious ritual played a central role in inspiring

foreign workers to learn to write. After a day's work was done, Canaanite workers would have observed their Egyptian counterparts' rituals in the beautiful temple complex to Hathor, and they would have marveled at the thousands of hieroglyphs used to dedicate gifts to the goddess. In Goldwasser's account, they were not daunted by being unable to read the hieroglyphs around them; instead, they began writing things their own way, inventing a simpler, more versatile system to offer their own religious invocations.

The alphabet remained on the cultural periphery of the Mediterranean until six centuries or more after its invention, seen only in words scratched on objects found across the Middle East, such as daggers and pottery, not in any bureaucracy or literature. But then, around 1200 B.C., came huge political upheavals, known as the late Bronze Age collapse. The major empires of the near east—the Mycenaean Empire in Greece, the Hittite Empire in Turkey and the ancient Egyptian Empire—all disintegrated amid internal civil strife, invasions and droughts. With the emergence of smaller city-states, local leaders began to use local languages to govern. In the land of Canaan, these were Semitic dialects, written down using alphabets derived from the Sinai mines.

These Canaanite city-states flourished, and a bustling sea trade spread their alphabet along with their wares. Variations of the alphabet—now known as Phoenician, from the Greek word for the Canaanite region—have been found from Turkey to Spain, and survive until today in the form of the letters used and passed on by the Greeks and the Romans.

In the century since the discovery of those first scratched letters in the Sinai mines, the reigning academic consensus has been that highly educated people must have created the alphabet. But



▲
The sweeping view from the plateau at Serabit el-Khadim, turquoise capital of ancient Egypt.

“
**EVERY WORD WE READ AND
WRITE STARTED WITH HIM
AND HIS FRIENDS.**
”

Goldwasser's research is upending that notion. She suggests that it was actually a group of illiterate Canaanite miners who made the breakthrough, unversed in hieroglyphs and unable to speak Egyptian but inspired by the pictorial writing they saw around them. In this view, one of civilization's most profound and most revolutionary intellectual creations came not from an educated elite but from illiterate laborers, who usually get written out of history.

Pierre Tallet, former president of the French Society of Egyptology, supports Goldwasser's theory: “Of course [the theory] makes sense, as it is clear that whoever wrote these inscriptions in the Sinai did not know hieroglyphs,” he told me. “And the words they are writing are in a Semitic language, so they must have been Canaanites, who we know were there from the Egyptians' own written record here in the temple.”

There are doubters, though. Christopher Rollston, a Hebrew scholar at George Washington University, argues that the mysterious writers likely knew hieroglyphs. “It would be improbable that illiterate miners were capable of, or responsible for, the invention of the alphabet,” he says. But this objection seems less persuasive than Goldwasser's account—if Egyptian scribes invented the alphabet, why did it promptly disappear from their literature for roughly 600 years?

Besides, as Goldwasser points out, the close connection between pictograms and text would seem to be evident all around us, even in our hyper-literate age, in the form of emojis. She uses emojis liberally in her emails and text messages, and has argued that they fulfill a social need the ancient Egyptians would have understood. “Emojis actually brought modern society something important: We feel the loss of images, we long for them, and with emojis we have brought a little bit of the ancient Egyptian games into our lives.” ♦

LAY OF THE LAND

In Ohio, a legal battle over access to some of the world's largest human-made earthworks

ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO, indigenous people who were part of the Hopewell culture built a series of huge earthen structures in stunningly precise shapes. Some of the most celebrated of these works once spanned four-and-a-half-square miles in central Ohio. But the famous Octagon feature is now home to a private golf course, Moundbuilders Country Club, and largely inaccessible to the public. Ohio History Connection (OHC), a nonprofit that has owned the full site since 1933, asserts eminent domain in a lawsuit to buy back the club's lease, which would hold another 57 years. The club disputes OHC's right to break the contract. In January 2020, a state appeals court ruled for OHC; the case is headed to the Ohio Supreme Court. ♦

1

Sometime between the years A.D. 1 and 400, indigenous Americans constructed these massive earthworks, one basketful of dirt at a time. They were more interested in breadth than height. Each of the Octagon's eight symmetrical walls measures 550 feet long and stands 5 to 6 feet high. Four Roman Colosseums could fit inside the Octagon; Stonehenge could fit inside this seemingly tiny circle.

2

The Hopewell had a deep understanding of geometry and astronomy. They built the Octagon so that every 18.6 years, if you stood on Observatory Mound and looked straight across the center of the complex—through the circle and parallel walls, down to the far end of the Octagon—the moon would be perfectly aligned with the earthworks' main axis while hovering in its northernmost rising position.

3

This is the largest preserved set of parallel walls from the Hopewell world. Long ago, walled paths like these stretched for miles, most likely serving as ceremonial walkways that linked earthwork sites.

4

At the Octagon vertices, the Hopewell made gateways that are visually obstructed by barrier mounds. The purpose of these ancient mounds is unknown, though some historians believe the Hopewell could have used them like admission booths during ceremonial gatherings, with clans entering through respective gateways.

5

The 50-acre Octagon is one of eight sites among these earthworks that is vying for a coveted Unesco World Heritage designation. The nomination won't go forward until the Octagon is accessible to the public—that is, once it's no longer a private golf course. This raised platform is the only place where visitors can view the Octagon most days.

6

The Octagon likely served ceremonial purposes that drew thousands from all over—perhaps from as far as the East Coast—for funerals or naming ceremonies. It may have been the center of a trade network: Among Hopewell artifacts, archaeologists have found shells from the Gulf Coast, shark teeth from the Atlantic and obsidian from Yellowstone. (See "The Lost History of Yellowstone," p. 32.)



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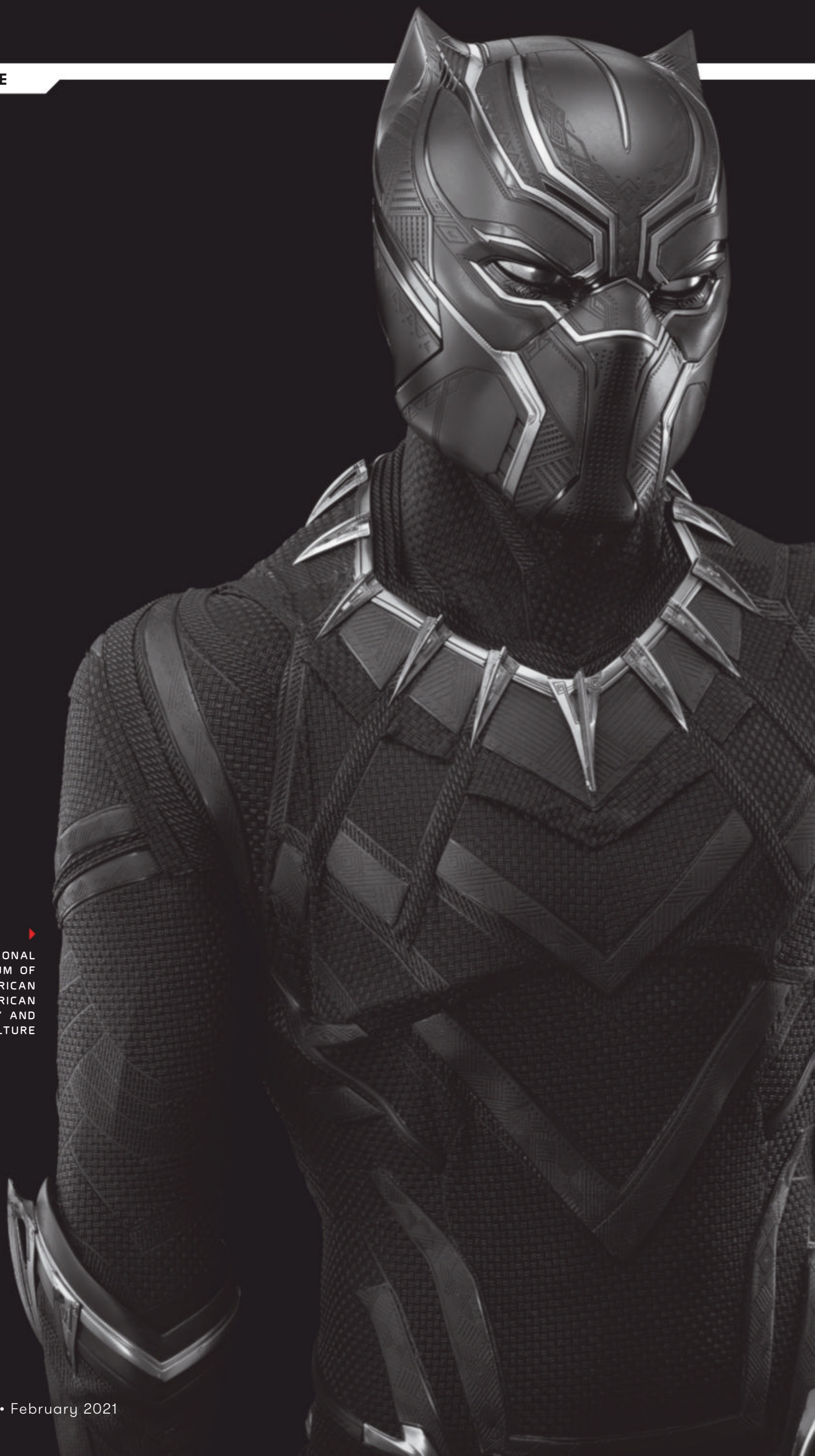
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CULTURE



By
Jamelle Bouie

Photograph by
Walter Larrimore

Hail the King of Wakanda

The black superhero who changed comics forever

IT WAS CLEAR FROM the moment it reached multiplexes in 2018 that *Black Panther* wasn't just a hit; it was a phenomenon. The title character, portrayed by the late Chadwick Boseman, became an inspiration to millions of Americans. Black Panther, a.k.a. T'Challa, king of the fictional African nation of Wakanda, stood as a symbol of strength, honor

and pride in one's African ancestry. And the character's essential qualities—his regal bearing and quiet determination—are captured in his costume, designed for the screen by Ruth E. Carter, the film's costume designer, who built on the work of Ryan Meinerding, a Marvel artist and character designer.

Carter embellished some versions of the costume with raised triangles, which she has called “the sacred geometry of Africa,” given the shape's long significance to the continent's art and culture. Her emphasis on the essential dignity of the character captures the ambition of his originators, the writer Stan Lee and the artist Jack Kirby, who debuted Black Panther for Marvel Comics in *Fantastic Four* #52 in 1966. Following some of the most important moments of the civil rights movement, the comics pioneers wanted Black Panther to break stereotypes and embody black pride.

“At that point I felt we really needed a black super-

hero,” Lee recalled in a 2016 interview. “And I wanted to get away from a common perception.” Thus, Lee decided to make T'Challa “a brilliant scientist” living in a secret, underground African technoutopia, “and nobody suspects it because on the surface it's just thatched huts with ordinary ‘natives.’”

But as much as the Black Panther portrayed by Boseman (under the direction of Ryan Coogler) fits this vision, he is also different from the character created by a white writer and a white artist for a white audience more than 50 years ago. Today's T'Challa is indebted to a generation of black writers and artists who moved beyond mere representation to build a character with more depth than the one dismissed in his first appearance by fellow comics crimefighter Ben Grimm, a.k.a. the Thing, as “some refugee from a Tarzan movie.” In the evolution of the Black Panther, you can see a clear arc in the history of black superheroes—how they've become richer, fuller and even inspiring characters.

Black characters have had a fraught history in comic books from the outset. They were “largely relegated to background and secondary roles and characterized primarily through their figurative embodiment of racist stereotypes,” Kevin Strait, a curator at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, says in an interview.

In the 1940s and '50s, however, depictions began to change. In 1947, a group of black artists and writers published *All-Negro Comics*, a collection of stories featuring black characters. In 1965, the now-defunct Dell Comics published two issues of *Lobo*, a western starring a heroic black gunslinger. Still, most comics creators of the period—including the two men who launched *Lobo*—were white, and like the Black Panther, who was something of a token, most black characters who followed in his path over the next two decades would find themselves in a similar role. Luke Cage, for example, first appeared in *Luke Cage, Hero for Hire* #1s in 1972, the height of the blaxploitation movement, as a jive-talking hustler who fought crime for money. 🗨️

WALTER LARRIMORE / NMAAHC, COLLECTION OF NMAAHC, GIFT OF MARVEL STUDIOS AND THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY, ©MARVEL

Nubia, introduced in *Wonder Woman* #204 in 1973, was just a palette-swapped version of the title character.

But in 1993, the black superhero saw a new dawn with the arrival of Milestone Media. Founded by black artists and writers, Milestone devoted itself to black and multicultural stories. The comic *Icon*, for example, presents a Superman-like alien who arrives on Earth to find himself in the antebellum South. There, he takes the form of the first person he sees: an enslaved African American. Milestone set a new standard for black characters, while serving as a talent incubator for writers and artists who would go on to influence the entire industry. Dwayne McDuffie, one of its founders, defined traditional characters like Batman for a generation of new audiences and brought original creations like the black superhero Static to the screen. Christopher Priest, who broke barriers as the first black editor at Marvel and was part of the group that established Milestone, would go on to rejuvenate Black Panther, writing an acclaimed series from 1998 to 2003 that lifted the character from obscurity to the A-list of comics. As written by Priest, the Black Panther is an enigmatic genius who maintains a careful remove from the Western world. It is Priest who shaped the character for the next 20 years, and whose work (along with that of Ta-Nehisi Coates, who began writing the character for the page in 2016) was the foundation for the hero we saw in the film.

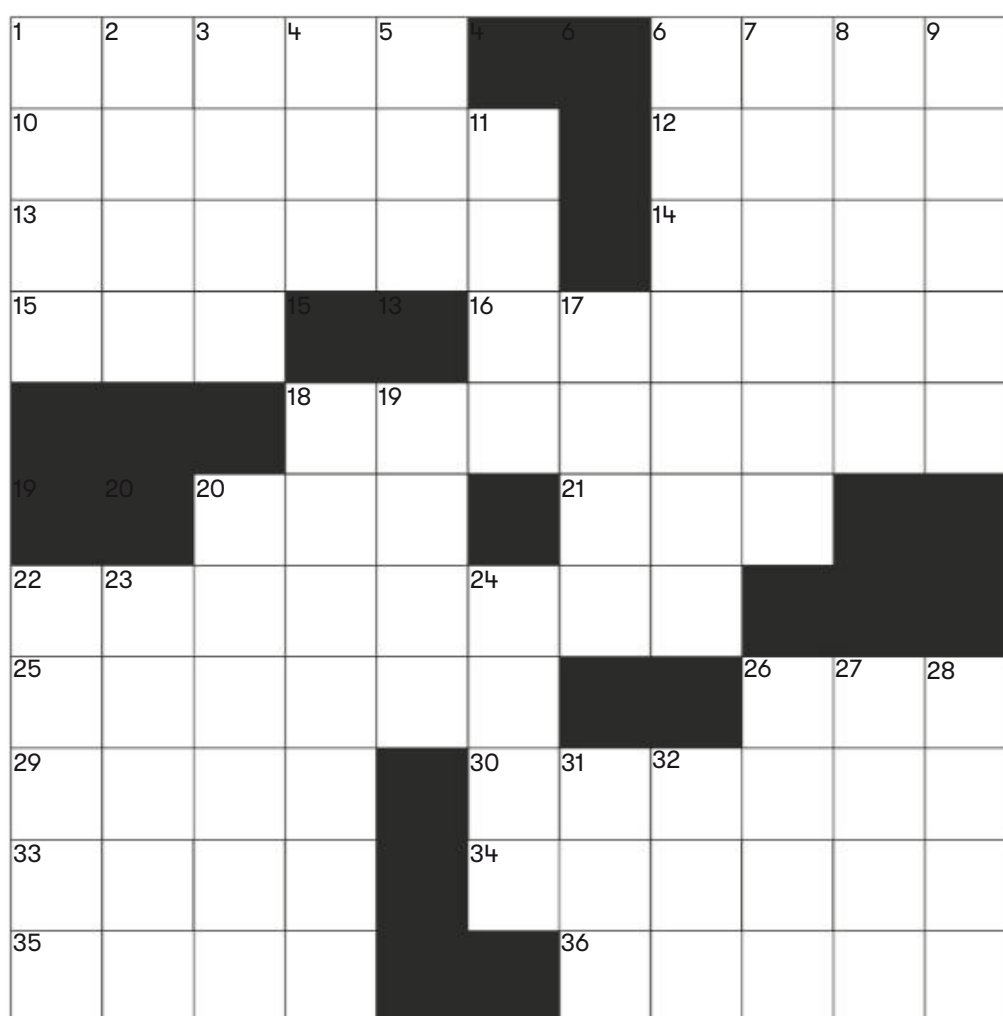
This tradition of representation and black storytelling continues. Riri Williams, a young black woman who dons a version of Iron Man's armor to become Ironheart, was a 2016 creation by Brian Michael Bendis, who is white. But in 2018, she was reimagined by Eve Ewing, an assistant professor at the University of Chicago and a black woman. Ewing's Ironheart was a much-praised take on the character, which, in the words of one reviewer, "perfectly walks the line between classically Marvel and refreshingly new." Today's black artists—and the superheroes they boldly create—are standing on the shoulders of Black Panther. ♦

WATCH A SLIDESHOW about the history of black superheroes in comics and films at [Smithsonianmag.com/blackpanther](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blackpanther)

Don't Be Puzzled

YOU CAN FIND EIGHT CLUES IN THESE PAGES

By Sam Ezersky



Across

- 1 Loud, like a crowd
- 6 Little rascals
- 10 With 13-Across, food touted as a luxury spread in the late 19th century
- 12 People of Yellowstone, once
- 13 See 10-Across
- 14 Sicily's Mount ____
- 15 Catch with one's eye
- 16 Personify
- 18 Vocational offering in school, for short
- 20 Batman and Robin, e.g.
- 21 Sound lead-in to -ible
- 22 Trombone-playing style used by Kid Ory
- 25 Speaker on a soapbox
- 26 ____ Perce (people of Yellowstone, once)
- 29 ____ platter (Chinese food choice)
- 30 Keys on a piano?
- 33 Lyft alternative
- 34 Trade for the Sinai laborers who created the first alphabet
- 35 Trim (down), as costs
- 36 Lies in the sun

Down

- 1 Certain radio alerts, for short
- 2 Go back for more
- 3 Like some high-fiber cereals
- 4 Hill worker
- 5 Regret
- 6 Pale color with a "cool" name?
- 7 *The Wind in the Willows* amphibian
- 8 Spots for skipping rocks
- 9 Moves left, right, left, right
- 11 Beech, birch or bonsai
- 17 Exam for doctors-to-be, in brief
- 18 Phenomenon displayed among Imanishi's Japanese macaques
- 19 Opposite of "for here"
- 20 Product from Pampers
- 22 Refill just a bit, say
- 23 Island near Curaçao
- 24 Ancient land for which a Semitic language is named
- 26 Long-running TV drama with a "Los Angeles" spinoff
- 27 Text-displaying technology for digital books
- 28 Some sharp turns
- 31 Ad ____
- 32 Words before pickle or pile

See the solution on Page 117.



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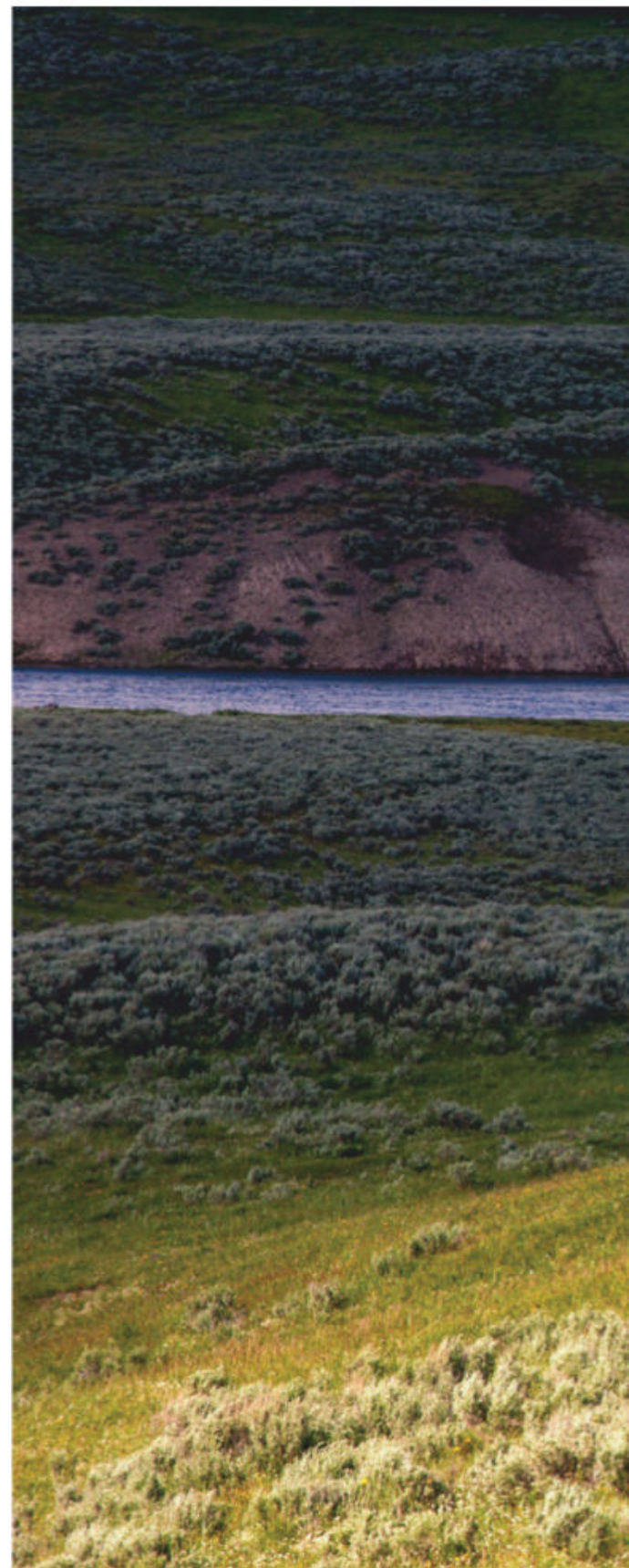
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW GEIGER

STONE

DEBUNKING THE MYTH THAT

THE GREAT NATIONAL PARK WAS A

WILDERNESS UNTOUCHED BY HUMANS



AFTER 14 SUMMERS EXCAVATING IN

Yellowstone National Park, Doug MacDonald has a simple rule of thumb. “Pretty much anywhere you’d want to pitch a tent, there are artifacts,” he says, holding up a 3,000-year-old obsidian projectile point that his team has just dug out of the ground. “Like us, Native Americans liked to camp on flat ground, close to water, with a beautiful view.”

We’re standing on a rise near the Yellowstone River, or the Elk River as most Native American tribes called it. A thin wet snow is falling in late June, and a few scattered bison are grazing in the sagebrush across the river. Apart from the road running through it, the valley probably looks much as it did 30 centuries ago, when someone chipped away at this small piece of black glassy stone until it was lethally sharp and symmetrical, then fastened it to a straightened shaft of wood and hurled it at bison with a spear-throwing tool, or *atlatl*.

Among the Native peoples migrating seasonally across Yellowstone were the Nez Perce, above left, moving from Idaho’s Snake River east to the Great Plains.



“WE KICKED NATIVE AMERICANS OUT OF YELLOWSTONE TO MAKE A PARK. NOW WE’RE TRYING TO FIND OUT HOW THEY LIVED HERE.”

^
Hunted nearly to extinction by white hunters, bison numbered only about two dozen inside Yellowstone in 1902. Today the herd consists of about 4,800.

^^
PREVIOUS SPREAD
The otherworldly terrain dazzled early explorers. In 1827, trapper Daniel Potts noted that geysers erupted with a roar like “that of thunder.”

“The big myth about Yellowstone is that it’s a pristine wilderness untouched by humanity,” says MacDonald. “Native Americans were hunting and gathering here for at least 11,000 years. They were pushed out by the government after the park was established. The Army was brought in to keep them out, and the public was told that Native Americans were never here in the first place because they were afraid of the geysers.”

MacDonald is slim, clean-cut, in his early 50s. Originally from central Maine, he is a professor of anthropology at the University of Montana and the author of a

recent book, *Before Yellowstone: Native American Archaeology in the National Park*. Drawing on his own extensive discoveries in the field, the work of previous archaeologists, the historical record and Native American oral traditions, MacDonald provides an essential account of Yellowstone's human past. Tobin Roop, chief of cultural resources at Yellowstone, says, "As an archaeologist, working in partnership with the park, MacDonald has really opened up our understanding of the nuances and complexities of the prehistory."

MacDonald sees his work, in part, as a moral necessity. "This is a story that was deliberately covered up and it needs to be told," he says. "Most visitors to the park have no idea that hunter-gatherers were an integral part of this landscape for thousands of years."

In the last three decades, the National Park Service has made substantial efforts to research and explain the Native American history and prehistory of Yellowstone, but the virgin-wilderness myth is still promoted in the brochure that every visitor receives at the park entrance: "When you watch animals in Yellowstone, you glimpse the world as it was before humans." Asked if he considers that sentence absurd, or offensive to Native Americans, MacDonald answers with a wry smile. "Let's just say the marketing hasn't caught up with the research," he says. "Humans have been in Yellowstone since the time of mammoths and mastodons."

Shane Doyle, a research associate at Montana State University and a member of the Apsaalooke (Crow) Nation, burst out laughing when I read him that sentence from the brochure. But his laughter had an edge to it. "The park is a slap in the face to Native people," he said. "There is almost no mention of the dispossession and violence that happened. We have essentially been erased from the park, and that leads to a lot of hard feelings, although we do love to go to Yellowstone and reminisce about our ancestors living there in a good way."

ON THE ROAD BETWEEN the Norris Geyser Basin and Mammoth Hot Springs is a massive outcrop of dark volcanic rock known as Obsidian Cliff, closed to the public to prevent pilfering. This was the most

For more than 11,000 years, Obsidian Cliff served as an invaluable source of volcanic glass, which Native Americans fashioned into razor-sharp arrowheads and spear tips.

**"THE HOPEWELL PEOPLE
WOULD HAVE LEFT IN
EARLY SPRING AND
FOLLOWED THE RIVERS,
JUST LIKE LEWIS AND
CLARK, EXCEPT 2,000
YEARS EARLIER."**



A man wearing a tan jacket, dark pants, and a red cap is sitting on a large, weathered piece of driftwood on a dark, pebbly beach. The driftwood is partially submerged in the water. The background shows a vast body of water under a heavy, overcast sky with large, grey clouds. In the distance, low mountains are visible on the horizon.

Last summer, archaeologist Doug MacDonald (at Yellowstone Lake) and his team unearthed a Nez Perce encampment from 1877, when they fled the U.S. Cavalry.



ORIGINAL ARCHIVAL-IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHER: WILLIAM HENRY JACKSON

important source in North America for high-quality obsidian, a type of volcanic glass that forms when lava cools rapidly. It yields the sharpest edge of any natural substance on earth, ten times sharper than a razor blade, and Native Americans prized it for making knives, hide-scraping tools, projectile points for spears and atlatl darts, and, after the invention of the bow and arrow 1,500 years ago, for arrowheads.

For the first people who explored the high geothermal Yellowstone plateau—the first to see Old Faithful and the other scenic wonders—Obsidian Cliff was a crucial discovery and perhaps the best reason to keep coming back. In that era, after the rapid melting of half-mile-thick glaciers that had covered the landscape, Yellowstone was a daunting place to visit. Winters were longer and harsher than they are today, and summers were wet and soggy with flooded valleys, dangerous rivers and a superabundance of mosquitoes.

MacDonald made one of the most exciting finds of his career in 2013 on the South Arm of Yellowstone Lake: a broken obsidian projectile point with a flake removed from its base in a telltale fashion. It was a Clovis point, approximately 11,000 years old and made by the earliest visitors to Yellowstone. The Clovis people (named after Clovis, New Mexico, where their

distinctive, fluted points were first discovered in 1929) were hardy, fur-clad, highly successful hunters. Their prey included woolly mammoths, mastodons and other animals that would become extinct, including a bison twice the size of our modern species.

The Clovis point that MacDonald's team spotted on the beach is one of only two ever found in the park, suggesting that the Clovis people were infrequent visitors. They preferred the lower elevation plains of present-day Wyoming and Montana, where the weather was milder and large herds of megafauna supported them for 1,000 years or more. MacDonald thinks a few bands of Clovis people lived in the valleys below the Yellowstone plateau. They would come up occasionally in the summer to harvest plants and hunt and get more obsidian.

"Native Americans were the first hard-rock miners in Wyoming and it was arduous work," says MacDonald. "We've found more than 50 quarry sites on Obsidian Cliff, and some of them are chest-deep pits where they dug down to get to the good obsidian, probably using the scapular blade of an elk. Obsidian comes in a cobble [sizable lump]. You have to dig that out of the ground, then break it apart and start knap-

ping the smaller pieces. We found literally millions of obsidian flakes on the cliff, and we see them all over the park, wherever people were sitting in camp making tools.”

Each obsidian flow has its own distinctive chemical signature, which can be identified by X-ray fluorescence, a technique developed in the 1960s. Artifacts made of Yellowstone obsidian from Obsidian Cliff have been found all over the Rockies and the Great Plains, in Alberta, and as far east as Wisconsin, Michigan and Ontario. Clearly it was a valuable commodity and widely traded.

On the Scioto River south of Columbus, Ohio, archaeologists identified 300 pounds of Yellowstone obsidian in mounds built by the Hopewell people 2,000 years ago. It’s possible the obsidian was traded there by intermediaries, but MacDonald and some other archaeologists believe that groups of Hopewell made the 4,000-mile round trip, by foot and canoe, to bring back the precious stone.

“In 2009, we found a very large ceremonial knife, typical of the Hopewell culture and unlike anything from this region, on a terrace above Yellowstone Lake,” he says. “How did it get there? It’s not far-fetched to think that it was lost by Hopewell people on a trip to Obsidian Cliff. They would have left in

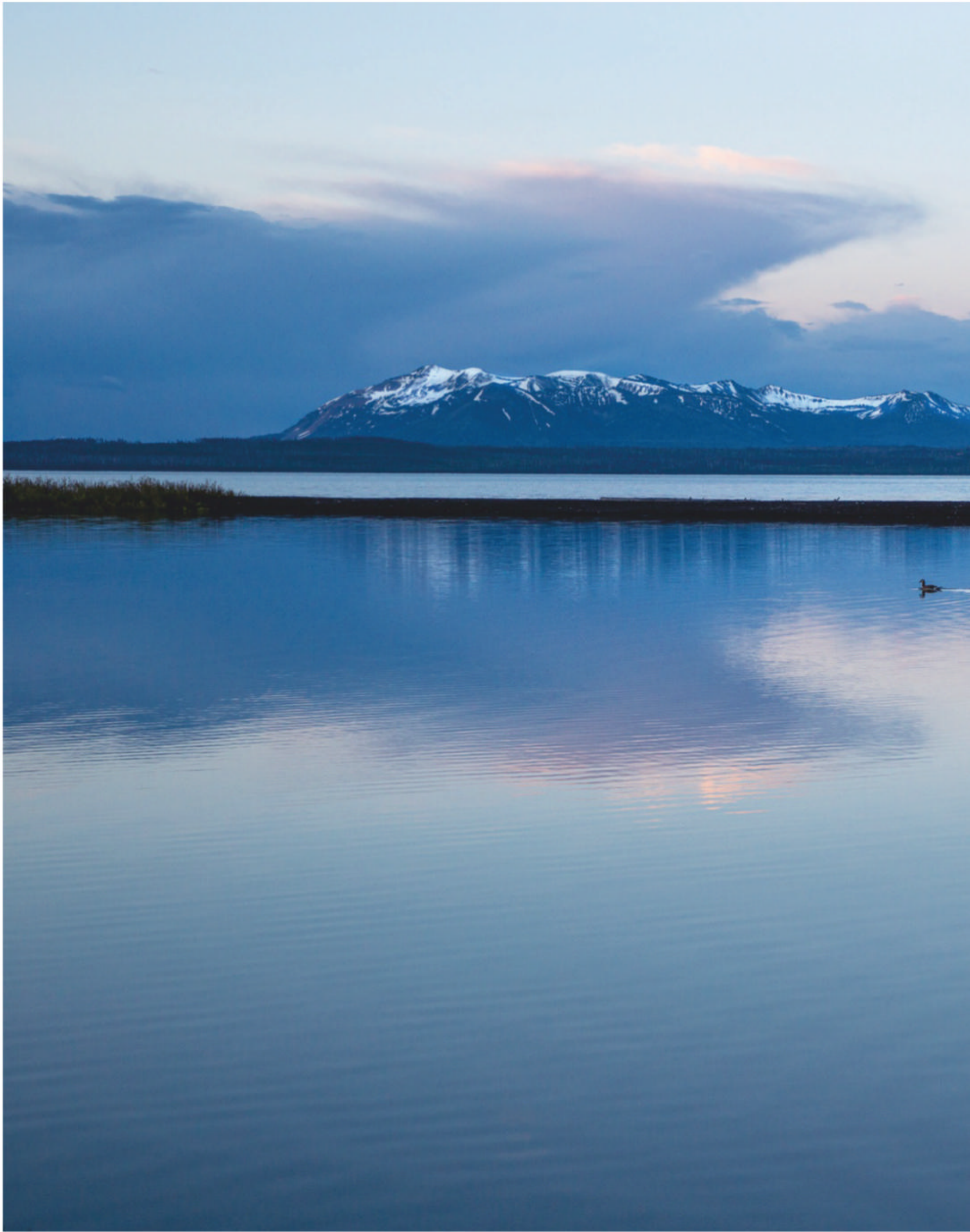
A portable shelter constructed by Shoshone people epitomizes the resourcefulness of hunter-gatherers: lodgepole pine framing and bison hide sheathing.

For 1,000 years, up until European American contact at Yellowstone, the Shoshone hand-shaped soapstone bowls for cooking and storage.

A 10,000-year-old hunting spear tip made of obsidian. It was produced by knapping, using hard rocks and antlers to break off flakes.



The caldera is a vast depression formed by the eruption of volcanic magma.



In the region
of Yellowstone
Lake, migrating
Native Americans
hunted bison,
deer, elk, bear
and rabbit, and
foraged for food-
stuffs including
bitterroot and
pine nuts.



early spring and followed the rivers, just like Lewis and Clark, except 2,000 years earlier.”

Another tantalizing relic, found inside a Hopewell mound in Ohio, is a copper sculpture of a bighorn ram’s horn. Then as now, there were no bighorn sheep in the Midwest or the Great Plains. But if Hopewell people were making epic journeys west to get obsidian, they would have seen bighorns in the

gets really rough in bad weather, much worse than you see today, and we nearly got swamped a few times. One of our crew got hypothermia. We had to build an illegal fire to save his life. Another time my guys were stalked on the beach by a cougar.”

Grizzlies are his biggest fear. MacDonald always carries bear spray in Yellowstone, never walks alone and is careful to make plenty of noise in the woods.

➤ MacDonald and colleagues recently unearthed a spear tip, left, and partially worked obsidian fragment, right, roughly 3,000 years old.



Northern Rockies, and the animals were particularly abundant in Yellowstone.

TWENTY MILES LONG and 14 miles wide, Yellowstone Lake is the largest natural high-elevation lake in North America. MacDonald describes the five summers he spent on the remote, roadless southern and eastern shores of the lake with a small crew of graduate students as “the most exciting and also the most frightening experience of my career.” Today we are standing on the northern shore, which is accessible by road. A cold wind is blowing, and the water looks like a choppy sea with spray flying off the whitecaps. “We had to use canoes to get there and load them with all our gear,” he recalls. “The water

One night at the lake, he recalls, he and his crew were eating steaks around a campfire when they saw a young grizzly bear staring at them from 200 yards. That night they heard his roars and barks echoing across the lake; they surmised that the bear was frustrated because a bigger grizzly was keeping him away from an elk carcass a quarter-mile distant.

“The next day he attacked our camp,” says MacDonald. “He peed in my tent, pooped everywhere, destroyed the fire pit, licked the grill, just trashed everything. We stayed up all night making noise, and thankfully it worked. He didn’t come back. I still have that tent and it still reeks of bear pee.”

They also had trouble from bison and bull elk that occupied their excavation sites and declined to leave. They endured torrential rains and ferocious electric

▲ MacDonald’s co-workers include Monte White, who is excavating while Scott Dersam and Bradan Tobin sift soil through screens to recover artifacts.

➤ National Park archaeologist Beth Horton tells visitors that Yellowstone’s “roads and trails here were Native American trails thousands of years ago.”



Archaeologists at the dig consult the Munsell color chart, a reference that standardizes names applied to sediment-layer colors. Soil stratification is used in dating finds.



“IT WAS EGALITARIAN BECAUSE THERE WAS NO WEALTH. IT WAS A HEALTHY WAY FOR HUMANS TO LIVE AND WE WERE WELL ADAPTED FOR IT BY EVOLUTION.”

storms. Once they had to evacuate in canoes because of a forest fire. “We all had the feeling that the gods wanted us out of there, and we kept finding amazing stuff. There were basically sites everywhere.”

Among their discoveries were a 6,000-year-old hearth, a Late Prehistoric stone circle (or tepee base) lying intact under a foot of dirt, and a wide variety of stone tools and projectile points. Excavating a small boulder with obsidian flakes littered around its base, they knew that someone, man or woman, boy or girl, had sat there making tools 3,000 years ago. “I think both genders knapped stone tools, because they were in such constant use and demand,” says MacDonald.

MacDonald’s team found evidence of continual human occupation on the lakeshore for 9,500 years, starting with the Cody Culture people, whose square-stemmed projectile points and asymmetrical knives were first discovered in Cody, Wyoming. More than 70 Cody points and knives have been found in



With the first organized expedition to Yellowstone in 1869, surveyor David Folsom marveled at “springs filled with mud resembling thick paint, pure white to yellow, pink, red and violet.”



“THE ORIGINAL CROW RESERVATION IN 1851 WAS OVER 30 MILLION ACRES, AND IT INCLUDED THE ENTIRE EASTERN HALF OF WHAT WOULD BE YELLOWSTONE.”

Yellowstone, with the greatest concentration at the lake. “The climate was getting hotter and drier and it was cool up here in summer. As the bison migrated up to the higher elevations, Cody people almost certainly followed them.”

Over the following millennia, as the climate warmed, the modern bison evolved and human populations rose in the Great Plains and Rockies. Yellowstone became a favored summer destination, drawing people from hundreds of miles away, and the lakeshore was an ideal place to camp. There is no evidence of conflict among the different tribal groups; MacDonald thinks they probably traded and visited with one another.

The peak of Native American activity in Yellowstone was in the Late Archaic period, 3,000 to 1,500 years ago, but even in the 19th century it was still heavily used, with as many as ten tribes living around the lake, including Crow, Blackfeet, Flathead, Shoshone, Nez Perce and Bannock.

Today, as sedentary people, we equate “living” in a place with long-term or even permanent settlement. But for hunter-gatherers who follow animal migrations, avoid climate extremes and harvest different plants as they ripen in different areas, the word has a different meaning. They live in a place for part of the year, then leave and come back, generation after generation. One Shoshone group known as the Sheepeaters seldom left the current park boundaries, because they were able to harvest bighorn sheep year-round. But most Native Americans in Yellowstone moved down to lower, warmer elevations in winter, and returned to the high plateau in the spring. A few brave souls returned in late winter to walk on the frozen lake and hunt bears hibernating on the islands.

“They were probably getting the spiritual power of the animal, and demonstrating their courage, by entering the dens,” says MacDonald. “People have hunted bears that way in Siberia, Northern Europe, anywhere there’s bears. Some people still do. You

> The majestic 308-foot Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River, as seen from Artist Point.

can see the videos on YouTube. Young adult males are the only ones stupid enough to do it, and I imagine that was the case here too.”

WHEN MACDONALD WAS a freshman at Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island, he studied political economy, international development and finance, and envisioned a career at the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. Then he spent a couple of summers in central Mexico with friends who liked visiting archaeological sites, often traveling on third-class rural “chicken buses” to get there.

“Some of those sites were amazing, and when I got back to Brown, I started taking archaeology classes,” he says. “One of them was taught by Richard Gould,



▲ To Native Americans, says Montana State University's Shane Doyle, Yellowstone is “spectacularly diverse, with many climates and cultural zones centered in one place.”

who is kind of a famous guy, and it was about hunter-gatherers. It made me realize that I didn’t want to spend my life at the World Bank. I wanted to work on the archaeology of hunter-gatherers instead.”

MacDonald has never killed his own meat and knows little about edible and medicinal plants, but he believes that hunting and gathering is the most successful way of living that humanity has ever devised. “We’re proud of our technological advances, but in historical terms our society has lasted a split second,” he says. “We lived as hunter-gatherers for three million years. We moved around in extended family groups that took care of each other. It was egalitarian because there was no wealth. It was a healthy way for humans to live and we were well adapted for it by evolution.”

He came to Yellowstone because it’s the ideal place to study the archaeology of hunter-gatherers. It has never been farmed or logged, and most of its archaeo-





A landscape photograph of a geothermal area. In the foreground, there is a river with dark, blue water flowing through a field of green grass and low-lying vegetation. To the left of the river, there is a sandy, light-colored bank. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear blue sky. Several plumes of white steam or smoke are rising from the ground, indicating geothermal activity. The overall scene is a natural, rugged landscape.

Springs at Black
Sand Basin,
where the water
in places is
boiling hot and
the distinctively
colored granules
are obsidian.

**“IT MIGHT TAKE A
REALLY LONG TIME,
BUT I’M HOPEFUL
WE’LL GET THERE IN
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KEEP PRETENDING WE
WERE NEVER THERE.”**

logical sites are intact. Morally, however, it’s a difficult place for him to work, because he “greatly laments” the removal of hunter-gatherers from the land and wishes they could come back. “There’s an irony to this,” he says. “We kicked Native Americans out of Yellowstone to make a park. Now we’re trying to find out how they lived here.”

In the oral traditions of the Crow, Shoshone, Blackfeet, Flathead, Bannock, Nez Perce and other tribes with ancient associations to Yellowstone, there is a rich store of material about the country they knew as “land of the geysers,” “land of the burning ground,” “the place of hot water,” “land of vapors” or “many smoke.” Much of this knowledge was gathered into a 2004 book, *Restoring a Presence*, by Peter Nabokov and Lawrence Loendorf, whose research was funded by the National Park Service.

Archaeological research supports and complements the tribal oral histories, and also reaches back further in time. In the view of Elaine Hale, who was the archaeologist at Yellowstone for 25 years, and has co-written a history of archaeology in the park, MacDonald “dives deeper than the rest.” Asked to elaborate, she says, “He uses a wider range of scientific techniques and equipment, like ground-penetrating radar and pollen analysis. He’s unique in the heart and thoughtfulness he brings to his work. He shares, promotes, communicates. He’s inspired so many students by bringing them to the park, including a lot of Native American students. For prehistoric archaeology in Yellowstone, no one is more well versed, and he’s reframed the whole approach.”

It was by measuring the decay of radioactive carbon in charcoal buried in the ground that MacDonald was able to date the lakeshore hearth as 6,000 years old, within an accuracy of 30 years. By testing blood and fat residues on 9,000-year-old stone knives and spear points, he found out that Cody peo-

> At the edge of Yellowstone Lake, a white chert flake speaks to the Native presence. Finds there have been scientifically dated to about 1,000 years ago.

ple in Yellowstone primarily hunted bison and bear, but also elk, deer, rabbit and other species.

Microscopic remains of plants sifted from ancient campsites reveal what Native Americans were gathering thousands of years ago. Camas and bitterroot, both of which contain protein and grow in alpine meadows, were presumably vital to survival. Traces also have been detected of goosefoot, sunflower, sagebrush, wild onion, prickly pear cactus, balsamroot and various grasses, although hundreds of other species were probably gathered as well. In



their campfires they were burning pine, spruce, ash, aspen, sagebrush and mistletoe.

At a site above the Yellowstone River, MacDonald’s crews excavated three stone circles marking the location of tepees. The circles were 400 years old and they inspired MacDonald to imagine a day in the existence of the family who had lived here. “I thought about them in late October,” he says. “The father, uncle and son are hunting in the hills above the river, the women collecting driftwood from the riverbanks, everyone is nervously watching black storm clouds come over the

LEARN MORE about the Crow Nation’s relationship to the land at [Smithsonianmag.com/yellowstone](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/yellowstone)



◀ An obsidian arrow point, left, and a flat chert cutting tool, right, found by archaeologists. The knife would have been used to butcher bison, elk and deer.

—
A tree swallow soars over Yellowstone Lake. Three hundred bird species have been recorded in the park, including 11 types of owls.



mountains and realizing that it's time to hurry home."

In MacDonald's imagining, the father has killed a deer with his bow, and now, with the help of his brother and son, he quickly butchers it. They use large obsidian knives hafted by rabbit cordage to bone handles. The meat, which they pack into leather bags, will provide food to the extended family for a few days, and the hide will be made into leggings for the coming winter. Meanwhile, mother and her baby, grandmother, aunt and daughter walk along the river in a howling wind, followed by three wolf-like dogs. They surprise a rabbit, which daughter shoots with her bow. She skins the animal with an obsidian blade while the baby wails on her mother's back from the bitter wind and driving snowflakes.

In the last ten days, this extended family band has raised and lowered its tepee five times. They are moving quickly off the high Yellowstone plateau toward their first winter camp by the river. Now, as the storm rages with full force, they raise the tepee again, father and son tying the poles together at the top while the women adjust the hides. Grandmother and aunt push rocks over the bottom edges of the hides, to block the wind and snow. The entire process takes about an hour. Everyone has cold feet and numb hands except the baby in its cradle board.

They enter the tepee and manage to get a fire



The grasslands of Lamar Valley, where archaeologists studying former Native American camps have found evidence of butchered bison.





going with the dry willow and sagebrush that the women packed in a bag. They lay down their gear and sleeping hides of bear and bison on the floor of the tepee, which is broad enough to accommodate all six adults and three children. The women unpack the rabbit meat and a variety of wild herbs and vegetables. They will eat well this evening and stay warm as the first winter storm of the year rages outside.

Four hundred years later, MacDonald's crew excavated the fire pit in this tepee circle. They found tiny pieces of charcoal from the sagebrush in the fire, pieces of rabbit bone and plants from a stew, a stone scraping tool used to process deer hide into leggings, and a small pile of obsidian flakes. "I imagine that daughter made herself a new arrow point to replace the one she used to kill the rabbit," says MacDonald. "They kept the fire going all night with sagebrush, and the sparks went up through the intercrossed poles high above them."

A particular challenge for archaeologists in Yellowstone is the acidic soil, which has dissolved away most organic material in the archaeological record. They can't determine what clothing looked like, for example, and they've found the remains of only a few human beings. One was a woman buried with a dog 2,000 years ago near the current location of the Fishing Bridge visitor center. When human remains are discovered, the park service calls in elders and council members from the 26 Native American tribes associated with Yellowstone, who decide the best course of action. The woman and her dog were reburied inside the park with a traditional ceremony.

MacDonald thinks that the steep, forbidding mountains above the plateau are the real terra incognita for archaeologists. Yellowstone has 40 mountain peaks above 10,000 feet, and we know from Native American testimonies that they were important religious sites. People went there to pray and seek visions by fasting. For shelter from the wind, they built small structures of stacked rocks known as fasting beds. A few of these have been found in Yellowstone, on peaks with panoramic views, and MacDonald is confident that archaeologists will locate more.

There is no truth to the idea that Native Americans were afraid of the geysers and thermal features. Archaeologists have excavated hundreds of campsites near the geysers, and the Shoshone



▲ Sheepeater Cliff, on the Gardner River, some 6,800 feet above sea level. The Sheepeaters, who were Shoshone, relied on hunting bighorns.

would soak the horns of bighorn sheep in the bubbling hot springs before reshaping them into beautiful and deadly bows. In general, Yellowstone's geysers, mud pots, hot springs and fumaroles were regarded as places of great spiritual power. From interviews with Plenty Coups, Hunts to Die and other 19th-century Crow warriors, we know that a famous Crow shaman called the Fringe (born in 1820, he died from smallpox in the 1860s) would come to the big geysers in Yellowstone to heal wounded people and seek visions.

According to Hunts to Die, in his interview with the photographer-ethnographer Edward Curtis, the spirits in the geysers were afraid of people, rather than the other way around. But if you approached the spouting water in a pure and humble manner, some Native Americans believed, the spirits would reveal themselves and you could harness their powers.

BYLINES

Contributor **Richard Grant**'s most recent article focused on Philip of Macedon and Alexander.

Montana-based photographer **Andrew Geiger**'s work appears for the first time in *Smithsonian*.



MUTED SUNLIGHT, FILTERING DOWN through a thin layer of clouds, works a kind of magic at the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River. It saturates the colors on the canyon walls—yellows, reds, dark brown, orange, pink, white—and makes them glow with such intensity that the rocks appear to be lit from within. This is my first time seeing this famous canyon with its thundering waterfalls. While I struggle to make visual sense of it—how can the colors glow so brightly in this gray light?—MacDonald tells me about the artist Thomas Moran, whose 1872 painting of this scene, when displayed to legislators in Washington, D.C., was instrumental in getting Yellowstone designated as America's national park.

But MacDonald's main reason for bringing me to this famed American vista was to point out that "this was part of the original Crow reservation." Shane Doyle, the Crow scholar at Montana State, later outlined the history. "The original Crow reservation in 1851 was over 30 million acres, and it included

the entire eastern half of what would be Yellowstone. In 1868, prompted by a gold rush, that was reduced to eight million acres, and we lost all our land in Wyoming. We had no conflict with white settlers, we scouted for the U.S. Army, we tried to be allies to the whites, and we got treated like all the other tribes. Our reservation now is about two million acres."

In 1872, when President Ulysses S. Grant signed 2.2 million acres of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho into existence as Yellowstone National Park, several different tribal groups were camped around Yellowstone Lake and along the Madison and Yellowstone rivers. The Crow still legally owned a strip of land in Montana along the Yellowstone River. Sheepeaters were hunting and gathering in the more remote areas and managed to stay inside the park for another seven years.

When the national park proposal was being debated in Washington, there had been little discussion about the "Indian" presence in Yellowstone and none about the land's cultural importance to the tribes. They belonged on reservations, it was thought, where they could be instructed in English, Christianity, sedentary agriculture, individualism, capitalism and other Euro-American values. The park was created to protect the scenic wonders and wildlife from white hunters, prospectors, loggers and settlers. To encourage tourism, park officials and local promoters played down the presence of Native Americans and circulated the falsehood that they were afraid of the geysers. Anthropologist Matthew Sanger, a curator at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, stresses that conflicts with Native Americans were ongoing in the West at that time; Custer's defeat at the Little Big Horn was in 1876. "Creating a massive park in tribal lands was a distinct political act and it happened under a president who was

fervently against Native peoples," he says. "The park also represents the idea in Western philosophy that people are separate from nature, whereas Native American philosophy sees them as deeply intertwined." On August 24, 1877, a party of nine visitors from Radersburg, Montana, were camped near Fountain Geyser, having made a glorious tour of the park. At 5 in the morning, as they were preparing breakfast, a group of Nez Perce warriors came into their camp, asking if they had seen soldiers and demanding food. Then more warriors appeared in the distance. The Radersburg party nervously packed up their wagons and started down the Firehole River, where they encountered some 800 Nez Perce and 2,000 horses. The nine tourists, having come to Yellowstone as sightseers, now found themselves in the thick of an armed conflict between the Nez Perce and the U.S. Army.

Faced with the prospect of becoming farmers on a reservation, these Nez Perce had chosen to flee their homelands in Oregon. They were being pursued

CONTINUED ON PAGE 116

First IN THE HOUSE



illustration by ULI KNÖRZER

by BOBBY J. DONALDSON

*Born enslaved,
Joseph Rainey of South
Carolina was elected to Congress*

*150 years ago. But the impact
of this momentous step in
U.S. race relations did
not last long*

reporting by CHRISTOPHER FREAR

Rainey's "polite and dignified bearing enforces respect," an 1871 newspaper report said before disparaging him as unequal to the "best men of the House."



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EPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH HAYNE RAINEY

rose from his intricately carved wooden desk, ready to deliver one of the most important speeches of his life. The campaign for a new civil rights bill had stalled

in the Senate, and Rainey could sense support in the House slipping away. White members of Congress had no experience living in fear of the Ku Klux Klan or being demeaned every day in ways both large and small. Rainey knew these indignities firsthand. On a boat ride from Norfolk, Virginia, to Washington, D.C., the main dining hall had refused to serve him. In a D.C. pub, Rainey had ordered a glass of beer, only to find he'd been charged far more than white patrons. A hotel clerk had pulled the representative by his collar and kicked him out of a whites-only dining room.

African American leaders back home in South Carolina had sent a resolution urging him to fight for the bill, which would guarantee equal treatment of all Americans, regardless of race. Now, Rainey challenged his colleagues. "Why is it that colored members of Congress cannot enjoy the same immunities that are accorded to white members?" he asked. "Why cannot we stop at hotels here without meeting objection? Why cannot we go to restaurants without being insulted? We are here enacting laws of a country and casting votes upon important questions; we have been sent here by the suffrages of the people, and why cannot we enjoy the same benefits that are accorded to our white colleagues on this floor?"

The state certificate declaring Rainey a U.S. representative. Three signatories—H.E. Hayne, F.L. Cardozo, and H.W. Purvis—were also African American.



The year was 1873.

A century and a half later, Americans are only beginning to acknowledge Rainey's contributions. He was the first African American to be seated in the United States House of Representatives and the first member of Congress born into enslavement. He was an architect of a crucial period in U.S. history, the era known as Reconstruction. Yet few are aware that Rainey and 15 other African Americans served in Congress during the decade just after the Civil War—or that there was a protracted battle over a civil rights act in the 19th century.

This obscurity is no accident. Rainey's hopes were thwarted when white supremacists used violence and illegal tactics to force him and his colleagues out

of office. Armed vigilante groups marauded throughout the South, openly threatening voters and even carrying out political assassinations. Southern Democrats—identifying themselves as "the white man's party"—committed wide-scale voter fraud.

After African American politicians were stripped of their positions, their contributions were deliberately hidden from view. Popular histories and textbooks reported that Southern Republicans, known by opponents as "scalawags," had

In this 1872 lithograph, Rainey sits second from right. Senator Hiram Revels is far left. All told, 16 African Americans served in Congress during Reconstruction.



joined forces with Northern “carpetbaggers” and allowed formerly enslaved people to have voting power they were unprepared to exercise. According to that story—taught for generations in schools North and South—the experiment of giving African Americans the vote had been a dismal failure, marked by incompetence and corruption.

Rainey has slowly regained some recognition. His family house in Georgetown, South Carolina, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and a park in the city was named in his honor. James E. Clyburn, a representative who currently represents part of Rainey’s district, lobbied the House to commission a new portrait of Rainey, which was unveiled in 2005 on the second floor of the Capitol. The portrait is now part of a newly launched exhibition at the Capitol, commemorating the 150th anniversary of Rainey’s December 1870 swearing in. The exhibition, which will remain on the walls for about three years, ends with a portrait of Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to Congress, in 1968.

The revival of Rainey’s legacy benefits greatly from the digitization of an array of primary records. These sources directly contradict earlier, disparaging histories. They offer new insight into how a man born a slave rose to be a respected national politician and how his career came to an abrupt and tragic end.



RAINEY WAS BORN in Georgetown, South Carolina, on June 21, 1832, in an enslaved family. Only fragments of information remain from his early life, beyond the fact that his father, Edward L. Rainey,

worked as a barber. In South Carolina, some enslaved people were allowed to practice a trade and even keep a small share of the income. Edward was able to cobble together enough money to buy, first, his own freedom, and then his family’s.

Rainey became a barber, like his father, and before the Civil War, he’d established his own business—Rainey’s Hair Cutting Salon—at the Mills Hotel in Charleston, a block from city hall. In prewar Charleston, Joseph Rainey occupied a relatively privileged yet precarious position. He was one of about 3,400 free people of color among 20,000 white and 43,000 enslaved people in the city. Their liberties were limited by law. Every free man over the age of 15 was re-



An 1866 illustration from *Harper's Weekly* shows women, Union soldiers and African Americans celebrating new legislation that gave former slaves full citizenship.



quired to have a white “guardian” to enable him to live in the city, and any “insolence” left the African American man open to violent assault. Free people of color had to pay an annual tax; if they failed to pay it, they could be sold into slavery for one year. Wherever they went, free people of color were assumed to be enslaved and had to show documents to prove they were not.

In September 1859, Rainey traveled to Philadelphia to marry Susan Elizabeth Cooper, the daughter of a free black family from Charleston. When the couple returned to South Carolina, Joseph faced legal trouble for having traveled to a free state. By state law, free people of color who traveled out of state were “forever prohibited from returning.” According to one biographical pamphlet, influential friends, perhaps white clients of his barbershop, interceded for him.

The state was already rife with tension about the future of slavery when Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election of 1860. In response, the South Carolina legislature voted to hold a special election for a state convention, and on December 20 the delegates—mostly secession-minded planters—voted unanimously to secede from the United States. Delegates marched through the streets of Charleston handing out placards declaring: “The Union Is Dissolved.”

On April 12, 1861, the newly formed Confederate Army opened fire on Fort Sumter, a Union outpost in Charleston Harbor—the beginning of the Civil War. Rainey was conscripted into service for the Confederacy. An early account suggests that he worked as a waiter or steward on a blockade-running steamer, making eight or more trips to and from Nassau, Bahamas.

According to an oral tradition passed down through the Rainey family, Joseph made an audacious move in 1862. Taking advantage of the fact that “foreign” vessels were still permitted to trade in South Carolina, Joseph boarded a trade ship to Nova Scotia, then to St. George’s, Bermuda. Susan followed later on the same route. As the story goes, Joseph used to go to the docks when ships arrived to watch for her.

During the Civil War years, Bermuda, a British colony, was thriving. Slavery had ended there in 1834, and the Union’s wartime trade prohibitions against the South had made Bermuda a go-between for Southern plantations exporting cotton and the Confederate military importing weapons.

In St. George’s, Rainey worked as a barber. After an 1865 outbreak of smallpox closed the port in St. George’s, where the Raineys were living, the couple relocated to the capital city, Hamilton. Joseph continued barbering, and Susan started a successful dress-making business linked to a New York City designer.

One account based on Bermuda records suggests that Joseph received informal tutelage there from



Representative James E. Clyburn of South Carolina. Behind him are portraits of congressional predecessors Joseph Rainey and Robert De Large.



a highly educated customer at his barber shop. His personal journal shows a growing command of conventional spelling during this time. Bermuda is also mostly likely where he read the great works of literature, from Plato to Shakespearean tragedies, that he would later quote on the House floor.

In Bermuda, Rainey also joined a fraternal club and was involved in approving resolutions of condolence on Abraham Lincoln’s 1865 assassination, sending them on behalf of the Bermuda lodge to the U.S. consulate and to African American newspapers in New York City.

In September 1866, the Raineys took out a news-



“We simply desire that we shall be **recognized as men**; that we have no obstructions placed in our way.”

paper advertisement in the *Bermuda Colonist*: “Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Rainey take this method of expressing their thanks to the inhabitants of St. George’s for the patronage bestowed upon them in their respective branches of business.” The war was over, and Rainey—armed with new wealth, new knowledge and new social status—was ready to return to South Carolina, a state that needed him.



BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR, fewer than 10,000 free people of color lived in South Carolina. When Rainey returned in 1866, 400,000 newly freed people had increased the African American population to a majority of nearly 60 percent. Yet President Andrew Johnson, a Democrat, had subverted Congress and encouraged Southern white Democrats to rebuild their prewar governments. A bitter critic of civil rights legislation, Johnson declared, “This is a country for white men. . . . As long as I am president it shall be a government by white men.”

In South Carolina, the ex-Confederates had followed Johnson’s lead and enacted Black Codes designed to “establish and regulate the Domestic Relations of Persons of Colour.” One of these codes declared: “All persons of color who make contracts for service or labor, shall be known as servants, and those with whom they contract, shall be known as masters.”

Another made allowances for “suitable corporal punishment” against servants. People of color were forbidden from working as artisans, shopkeepers, mechanics or in any other trade apart from husbandry unless they secured a license from the district court. Such licenses, if given at all, expired after one year.

Rainey’s brother, Edward, had taken a leading role in protesting these codes and the unreconstructed state government. In November 1865, Edward had served as a delegate to the state Colored People’s Convention, which declared, “We simply desire that we shall be recognized as men; that we have no obstructions placed in our way; that the same laws which govern white men shall direct colored men; that we have the right of trial by a jury of our peers, that schools be opened or established for our children; that we be permitted to acquire homesteads for ourselves and children; that we be dealt with as others, in equity and justice.”

Throughout the South, newly free people mobilized to make sure their freedom would be recognized and their rights would be lasting. Days after Congress passed the first Reconstruction Act, in March 1867, African American residents of Charleston staged sit-ins and streetcar boycotts, establishing a form of civil disobedience and nonviolent protest that activists would repeat a century later.

There were enough Republicans in the U.S. Congress to overcome Johnson’s veto and pass four Reconstruction Acts. One ordered former Confederate states to draw up new constitutions and have them approved by voters—including people of color. Beginning on January 14, 1868, Joseph Rainey served as a delegate to a statewide constitutional convention. For the first time, African American delegates were in the majority, 76-48. Numerous outsiders—professionals, intellectuals, educators, sympathetic Republican politicians—moved to the state to take part in the Reconstruction experiment. The number included some speculators and opportunists, as Rainey later observed.

For his part, Rainey was politically pragmatic about change. He backed creating a public school system and was willing to vote for an election poll tax to fund it. He also contended that freed people should purchase land confiscated from plantation owners. He was among the minority of delegates at the convention who believed that voters should be obligated to pay a poll tax, for educational purposes, and that those who did not meet property qualifications should have “no right to vote.”

After the convention, in April 1868, Rainey was elected to the South Carolina State Senate where he served as chairman of the Finance Committee. In July, he cast his vote in the General Assembly to ratify the 14th Amendment, which gave full citizenship to all people born in America, including the formerly enslaved. Under this new constitutional amendment, African Americans now had “equal protection of the laws.”

The reaction came swiftly. Ex-Confederates and sympathizers formed terrorist groups, igniting violence across the South. On October 16, 1868, just months after the majority-black assembly took office, Rainey’s African American colleague, state Senator Benjamin F. Randolph, was changing trains in Hodges, South Carolina, when three white men shot him to death on the railway platform. The assassins jumped on horses and rode away. Though the mur-

der had taken place in broad daylight with several witnesses, law enforcement never identified any suspect. Democratic newspapers had disparagingly described Randolph as “a persistent advocate of the social equality idea.” His death was seen as a warning to Rainey and all those who advocated for the rights of the formerly enslaved



IN LATE 1870, the Rev. B. F. Whittemore of South Carolina left his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, creating a vacancy. Whittemore, a white New Englander who had served in the Union Army before moving to South Carolina, had been censured by the House for selling an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, and he resigned from the House rather than be expelled. The Republican Party nominated Rainey to serve in Whittemore’s place for the last months of the 41st Congress. Then, in November, he also won the election to serve in the 42nd Congress. He was 38 years old.

On Monday, December 12, 1870, Joseph Hayne Rainey approached the rostrum, escorted by Representative Henry Dawes. “Mr. Rainey, the first

Lorna Rainey at home in New York. “I was tasked with doing this when I was 3 years old,” she says of telling her ancestor’s story, “so I’m not going to give up on it.”



Among the resounding voices of support, though, was that of Frederick Douglass’ *New National Era*, which rejoiced that “despised Africa is now represented in no less a place than the American Congress.”

When the 42nd Congress began in March, two other men of color joined Rainey as part of the South Carolina delegation. Robert De Large was the son of a free Haitian woman and a Sephardic Jewish father, and Robert Brown Elliott had been born in Liverpool, England, and settled in South Carolina after the Civil War. Two other former slaves—Benjamin Turner of Alabama and Jefferson Long of Georgia—had joined Congress shortly after Rainey (though Long served less than two months). In the U.S. Senate, Hiram Revels, a freeborn man of color, had taken office in 1870.

Together, these men grappled with the waves of white supremacist violence roiling the South. They championed provisions of the 1871 Ku Klux Klan Act, which called for federal forces to intervene against Klan activity and for federal district attorneys to prosecute the terrorists. Some members of Congress challenged the constitutionality of the act. Rainey took the floor. “Tell me nothing of a constitution which fails to shelter beneath its rightful power

the people of a country!” he declared. The bill was approved and signed by President Grant.

Rainey and other Republican leaders soon received copies of an ominous letter written in red ink. “Here, the climate is too hot for you. . . . We warn you to flee. Each and every one of you

are watched each hour.”

Still, the coalition of African American representatives continued to grow. Its members debated issues that would determine the future of democracy. In 1872, for instance, Rainey fired back at a white colleague who feared that integrated schools might lead to full social equality between the races. Rainey disputed the way his colleague had depicted the African American: “Now, since he is no longer a slave, one would suppose him a leper, to hear the objections expressed against his equality before the law. Sir, this is the remnant of the old pro-slavery spirit, which must eventually give place to more humane and elevating ideas. Schools have been mixed in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and other States, and no detriment has occurred. Why this fear of competition with a negro? All they ask for is an equal chance in life, with equal advantages, and they will prove themselves to be worthy American citizens.”

“The old pro-slavery spirit must give place to more **humane and elevating** ideas.”

colored member in the House of Representatives, came forward and was sworn in,” the *Washington Evening Star* reported, after which he walked to his seat in the southwest corner, on the Republican side of the hall.

Others viewed Rainey with curiosity, seemingly obsessed by his appearance. In a January 1871 article, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* noted, “His long bushy side whiskers are precisely like a white man’s. His physical organization seems to be sufficiently strong to bear all the strain his mental construction will give. His forehead is middling broad and high and the ennobling organization of the mind is well developed. He has an excellent memory, and his perceptive powers are good. His polite and dignified bearing enforces respect.” The writer went on to qualify this praise: “Of course Mr. Rainey will not compare with the best men of the House of Representatives, but he is a good average congressman, and stands head and shoulders above the ordinary carpet bagger.” Other commentators were more blatantly racist. The Cincinnati *Daily Enquirer* asked, “Is it possible to get further down in National degeneracy and disgrace?”

BYLINES

Bobby J. Donaldson is an associate professor of history at the University of South Carolina. Berlin-based illustrator **Uli Knörzer’s** portrait of Joseph Rainey marks his debut in *Smithsonian*.



In 1874, Rainey spoke out on behalf of other oppressed minorities, opposing a bill to ban Chinese workers from taking part in a federally funded construction project in San Francisco. “They come here and are willing to work and assist in the development of the country,” he declared. “I say that the Chinaman, the Indian, the negro, and the white man should all occupy an equal footing under this Government; should be accorded equal right to make their livelihood and establish their manhood.”

On April 29 of that year, Rainey broke new ground. The entire House had gathered as a body to debate the Indian Affairs Bill over several days, and the Speaker of the House invited a sequence of representatives to serve as speaker pro tempore. Luke Potter Poland, a Republican from Vermont, was presiding when he invited Rainey to take the chair. It was the first time an African American had ever presided over the U.S. House of Representatives.

Newspapers spread the word, with headlines such as “Africa in the Chair.” The *Vermont Journal* declared, “Surely the world moves, for who would have dreamed it, 20 years ago?” The *Springfield Republican* noted that just a generation earlier, “men of Mr. Rainey’s race were sold under the hammer within bowshot of the capitol.” The *New Nation- al Era* noted the event with a jab at racist alarmism: “For the first time in the nation’s history a colored man, in the person of Hon. Joseph H. Rainey, of South Carolina, on Thursday last presided over the deliberations of the House of Representatives. . . . The earth continues to revolve on its axis.”



RAINEY AND HIS colleagues had Northern allies in the Republican Party. One of the most influential, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, had been an outspoken abolitionist. In 1870, he drafted a civil rights bill with the help of John Mercer Langston, an attorney who founded the law school at Howard University, the first to serve African American students. The bill would have banned discrimination in schools, churches and places of public access such as hotels and trains. Representative Benjamin Butler, also of Massachusetts, sponsored the bill in the House. As a lawyer and Union general, Butler had pioneered the strategy of treating enslaved people who escaped to Union Army camps as war contraband, which created a groundswell toward Lincoln’s emancipation policy.



Sumner and Rainey had become friends, and as Sumner approached death in 1874, he pleaded with Rainey, “Do not let the civil-rights bill fail!” Sumner died in March of that year without achieving his fervent goal.

A month later, Rainey—who had accompanied the Sumner family to Boston for the burial—gave a stirring speech before Congress, remembering a time when Sumner had nearly lost his life after South Carolina Congressman Preston S. Brooks assaulted him in the Senate chamber. “The unexpressed sympathy that was felt for him among the slaves of the South, when they heard of this unwarranted attack, was only known to those whose situations at the time made them confidants,” Rainey recalled. “Their prayers and secret importunities were ever uttered in the interest of him who was their constant friend and untiring advocate and defender before the high court of the nation.”

By that time, Rainey had earned a reputation for forcefully protecting the fledgling democracy in the South. Yet he was concerned enough about violent retaliation that he bought a second home, in Windsor, Connecticut, and his wife and children moved there in the summer of 1874. Even so, in a February 1875 speech Rainey made it clear that black politicians were not going anywhere. “We do not intend

Joseph Rainey’s monogrammed silverware is an emblem of his astonishing rise from slavery to prominence. It has been passed down through his family for generations.





to be driven to the frontier as you have driven the Indian,” said Rainey, who was also a member of the House Indian Affairs Act Committee and a champion of Indian rights. “Our purpose is to remain in your midst as an integral part of the body-politic.”

After Democrats gained control of the House in the 1874 election, Republican sponsors rushed to pass the civil rights bill. To gain votes, they removed the integration of schools and churches, the places that drew the fiercest opposition. Personal testimonies from African American members of Congress, and sympathy for the departed Sumner, helped give it traction, and, on March 1, 1875, President Grant signed the Civil Rights Act.

It was the final Reconstruction act. Disgruntled Southern Democrats were already making plans to reverse the progress.



HAMBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA, lies along the Savannah River across from Augusta, Georgia. By 1876, newly freed African Americans had revitalized the declining town, making it a haven of business and property ownership, and electoral

freedom. A town militia protected Hamburg from ex-Confederate vigilante raids. On July 4 of that year, 16 months after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, white travelers provoked a confrontation by attempting to drive a carriage through the African American militia’s Independence Day parade on Main Street. After trying to force the militia to disband and surrender its weapons in court, one of the white travelers returned on the day of the hearing with more than 200 men and a cannon. The vigilantes surrounded the militia in a warehouse,

er we are to be American citizens with all the rights and immunities of citizens or whether we are to be vassals and slaves again? I ask you to tell us whether these things are to go on.”

Instead, the massacre inspired a wave of open terror against African Americans across the state. In the 1876 gubernatorial race, Wade Hampton III—who had succeeded Jeb Stuart as a Confederate cavalry commander—reportedly won the election. But the tally made no mathematical sense. Of 184,000 eligible male voters, more than 110,000 were African American. Hampton had allegedly tallied more than 92,000 votes, which would have required 18,000 African Americans to choose a Confederate leader who had enslaved hundreds of people in South Carolina and Mississippi. A single county, Edgefield, reported 2,000 more votes than it had eligible voters.

The federal government did nothing in response to this flagrant abuse of the polls. In fact, its inaction was part of a secret deal. In the 1876 presidential election, the electoral college tally came down to three states in which both parties accused each other of fraud: South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana. In January 1877, just two months before the new president was supposed to take office, there was still no clear winner. The two parties made a compromise in private. The Democrats would allow Rutherford B. Hayes, the Ohio Republican, to become the next president of the United States. In return, his administration would allow white Democratic “redeemers” to reclaim their states from African Americans, however they saw fit. In essence, Northern Republicans agreed to take the presidency in exchange for withdrawing federal troops from the South, ending Reconstruction.

As Rainey campaigned for re-election in 1878, he met with President Hayes. He was joined by Stephen Swails, a freeborn African American from the North who had served as an officer in the Civil War. Together,

Rainey and Swails pleaded with the president to ensure fair elections. In keeping with the “compromise,” the president declined. When votes came in, the official count showed that John Smythe Richardson, a former Confederate officer and a Democrat, had somehow won 62 percent of the vote for Rainey’s seat—in

a strong Republican district where African Americans were the majority of residents.

Years later, Southern Democratic leaders boasted about all kinds of illegal acts during the elections of the 1870s, from folding more than one “tissue ballot” inside regular paper ballots to bringing Georgians across state lines to vote in South Carolina. In his

Years later, Southern Democratic leaders **boasted** about all kinds of **illegal acts** during the **elections** of the 1870s.

shot men as they tried to escape, captured the rest and tortured and executed six. Not one person was ever prosecuted for the murders.

In Congress, Joseph Rainey said the assassination of Hamburg leaders was a “cold-blooded atrocity.” He implored his fellow members, “In the name of my race and my people, in the name of humanity, in the name of God, I ask you wheth-

successful 1890 campaign for governor, Benjamin “Pitchfork” Tillman, leader of the Red Shirts at Hamburg, brazenly referred to the massacre. “The leading white men of Edgefield” had wanted to “seize the first opportunity that the Negro might offer them to provoke a riot and teach the Negroes a lesson.” He added, “As white men we are not sorry for it, and we do not propose to apologize for anything we have done in connection with it. We took the government away from them in 1876. We did take it.”



ON MARCH 3, 1879, Rainey gave his final remarks to the U.S. House of Representatives. “I was legally elected,” he declared, “but was defrauded and tissued out of my seat.” He asked his colleagues, “Must the will of the majority to rule, the very foundation and cornerstone of this Republic, be supplanted, suppressed, or crushed by armed mobs of one party destroying the ballots of the other by violence and fraud?” As he prepared to leave office, Rainey told Congress he hoped “an impartial historian” would tell the truth about his era.

Two months later in Nashville, Tennessee, Rainey addressed the National Conference of Colored Men with grim realism. “We may never hold another conference,” he told them. “The same faces will never be mirrored against these walls.” He warned, “We are a proscribed people. . . . We have stood a great deal. . . . We want to say to the white people the time has

“They didn’t see ‘congressman.’ They saw color.”

come for us to give warning that we have stood all we can. . . . We have been enriching the white man, and the time has come when forbearance has ceased to be a virtue. . . . We have stood too much now, and I would not blame any colored man who would advise his people to flee from the oppressors to the land of freedom.” Decades ahead of the Great Migration of the World War I era, the conference established a committee to explore conditions for a mass exodus to the western and northern United States.

The new America that Rainey had hoped to help create was a fading dream. In 1883, in an 8-1 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that key sections of the Civil Rights Act were unconstitutional. The majority

opinion declared the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause only prohibited discrimination by state and local government, not by private individuals and organizations. Furthermore, the court ruled, the 13th Amendment had ended slavery but did not make any guarantees against racial discrimination.

With diminishing resources and in poor health, Rainey returned to Georgetown, South Carolina, where his wife opened a millinery shop. At the age of 55, he contracted malaria and died less than a year later, in August 1887. The *Washington Evening Star* described him as “one of the most intelligent representatives of the colored race in the South.”

Months later, a Georgia newspaper noted that Reconstruction politicians were “glimmering into obscurity.” The reporter ignored all the violence and fraud, claiming that the African American had “dismissed politics from his mind and gone to making money. . . . He is too busy to vote.”

With black voters stripped of power, white politicians gathered to discuss the “Negro question.” At these meetings, there was little consideration of the African Americans who had held office during Reconstruction or the millions of new citizens they had represented. The whole era—from 1868 to 1876—was recast as an effort that had failed because black voters weren’t capable of making good decisions.

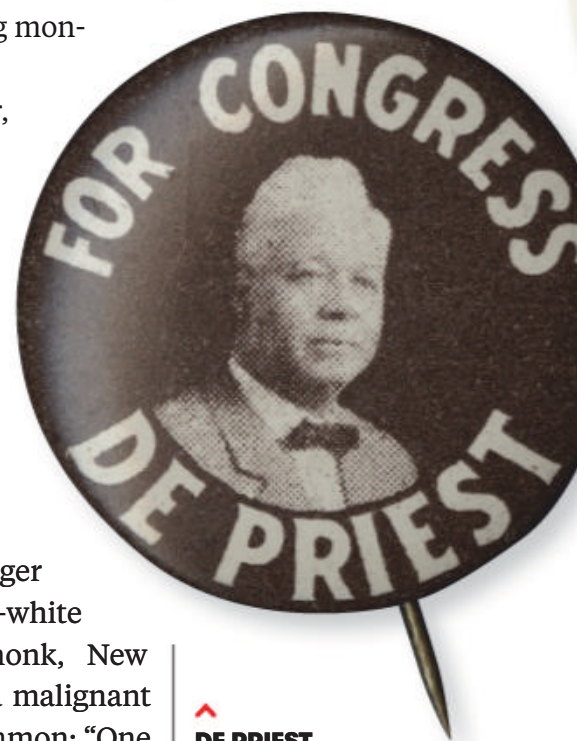
In 1890, Hayes, no longer president, spoke to an all-white gathering at Lake Mohonk, New York, and gave voice to a malignant belief that was all too common: “One of the devoted friends of the colored people tells us that ‘their ignorance, indifference, indolence, shiftless-

ness, superstition and low tone of morality are prodigious hindrances to the development of the great low country where they swarm.’ It is, perhaps, safe to conclude that half of the colored population of the South still lack the thrift, the education, the morality, and the religion required to make a prosperous and intelligent citizenship.”

PROMINENT ACADEMICS would amplify and even justify this derogatory depiction of 19th-century African American voters and politicians. William Archibald Dunning, a historian and political sci-

< CHISHOLM
A campaign button for Shirley Chisholm, first African American woman in Congress, who ran for Democratic Caucus chair in 1977—a century after Rainey.

>> MITCHELL & HAWKINS
In 1971, Parren Mitchell and Augustus Hawkins both became founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus.



> DE PRIEST
In 1929, Oscar De Priest became the first African American to serve in Congress since 1901. He remained the only black member for all three of his terms.

tist at Columbia University, worked with graduate students to write state-by-state histories of Reconstruction. Writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Dunning denigrated the era's African American politicians as "very frequently of a type which acquired and practiced the tricks and knavery rather than the useful art of politics, and the vicious courses of these negroes strongly confirmed the prejudices of the whites."

John Schreiner Reynolds, who had been influenced by Dunning, lambasted African American

DELLUMS

Ron Dellums served in the House during the Reagan era. Congress passed his anti-apartheid bill in 1986, overriding the president's veto.



IN RAINEY'S FOOTSTEPS



NIX

Robert N.C. Nix, an Ivy League-educated lawyer, served from 1958 to 1979. His son was the first African American on Pennsylvania's Supreme Court.

leaders in his 1905 book *Reconstruction in South Carolina*. He called one of those leaders "a vicious and mouthy negro" who "lost no opportunity to inflame the negroes against the whites." As Reynolds told it, the Red Shirt violence at Hamburg was "the culmination of troubles which had long been brewing in and around the negro-ridden town." The actual lives and contributions of African American politicians were entirely missing from establishment histories.

At the American Historical Association meeting in 1909, W.E.B. Du Bois tried to correct this with a presentation called "Reconstruction and Its Benefits." "There is danger today," Du Bois warned, "that between the intense feeling of the South and the conciliatory spirit of the North grave injustice will be done the negro American in the history of Reconstruction."

But the determined effort to recast Reconstruction as a debacle of corruption continued. In 1915, Woodrow Wilson showed *Birth of a Nation* at the White House. The revisionist film grossly demeaned Reconstruction and inspired the revival of the Ku Klux Klan as a nationwide terrorism organization.

Du Bois made another attempt to set the record straight in his 1935 book *Black Reconstruction in America: A History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. In that bold work, he explicitly described the contributions black leaders had made to American politics. "Rainey of South Carolina was one of the first Americans to demand national aid for education," he noted.

In 1940, not long after *Gone With the Wind* premiered in theaters, South Carolina erected a statue of Tillman, the former governor, U.S. senator and violent Red Shirt leader, near the entry to the South Carolina statehouse. The goal: remind South Carolina that Tillman had believed "in the inevitable triumph of white democracy." At the dedication, the keynote speaker was Senator James Byrnes, soon to serve as a U.S. Supreme Court justice. Byrnes praised Tillman for redeeming the state from black majority rule, saying, "He participated in the Hamburg and Ellenton Riots of 1876, and aided in the Democratic triumph of that year by frightening prospective Negro voters away from the polls."

But Rainey and his contemporaries hadn't been erased completely. In 1946, the Southern Negro Youth Congress, a decade-old political organization, gathered in the state capital Columbia. To prepare for W.E.B. Du Bois' keynote speech, the young organizers decorated the hall's upper level with six-foot-tall portraits of African American representatives from that era. Joseph Rainey was among them.

RAINEY'S CHILDREN and grandchildren continued his work, serving in leadership roles within the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which was founded in 1909. Joseph's daughter, Olive, used to lift young Lorna Rainey onto her lap and tell stories about the congressman. "Maybe my great-aunt knew that this would always be a story that's always timely," Lorna recalls today. "This is not a black story or a white story. This is a story of inspiration, of courage, of forward thinking."

Lorna, a talent agent based in New York, is now working on a documentary film about Rainey, drawing on new scholarship as well as the wealth of knowledge his family has handed down about him. The film, called *Slave in the House*, will celebrate Rainey's personal acts of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 118

ARTISAN AMERICA



MAKING



THE

TODAY'S CRAFT RENAISSANCE IS MORE THAN JUST AN ANTIDOTE TO OUR OVER



NATION

by

GLENN ADAMSON

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IT HAS NEVER BEEN EASY TO BE AN ARTISAN

in America. That was true when the United States was a new nation, and it is true today. In some ways, the challenges have not even changed that much. Yes, we seem to live our lives on permanent fast forward these days, with boundless opportunities for immediate gratification and distraction. Information and resources are more accessible than ever before. What used to be “mysteries of the trade” are now floating out there on YouTube. The most specialized tools and materials can be ordered for next-day delivery. Yet it still takes long years to achieve mastery in a craft. The difficulty of getting wood, leather, clay, fabric, stone or glass to do what you want remains the same. And the business side of earning a livelihood with your hands, day in, day out, is as demanding as ever.

-AUTOMATED WORLD. IT RENEWS A WAY OF LIFE THAT MADE US WHO WE ARE

ON

HISTORIC HANDIWORK Clockwise from left, flax spinning wheel, circa 18th century, believed to be from Mount Vernon, George Washington's estate in Virginia, and likely used by enslaved people; iron and tin tea kettle, circa 1900; cotton coverlet quilted in Texas, 19th century; Booker T. Washington, 1895, champion of vocational education and founder of the Tuskegee Institute.

These challenges, which all makers hold in common, can be great equalizers, giving craft the potential to cut across social divides and provide a powerful sense of continuity with the past. This possibility has never seemed more within our reach, for the United States is currently experiencing a craft renaissance, arguably the most momentous in our history. Not even the Arts and Crafts movement, which ended about a century ago, achieved the scale of today's artisan economy—or anything like its diversity. This is big news, and it is good news. But it's not necessarily simple.

To better understand this great resurgence of craft, I interviewed contemporary makers about their experiences of learning, setting up shop, developing a name for themselves, working with clientele and finally, passing skills on to others. Having recently completed a book on the history of American craft, I have been



TIME TRAVELING Having learned traditional clay pottery methods as a boy in the Cochiti Pueblo of New Mexico, Virgil Ortiz (left, in his studio) now works in costuming, fashion, film and jewelry as well. A longtime theme is the actual 1680 Pueblo revolt against Spanish colonizers—and his conception of those conflicting forces 500 years later, in 2180. Clockwise from above, ceramic sculptures embodying ancient and sci-fi elements; a knit dress; a traditional clay storage jar with futuristic imagery; a fictional soldier, Mopez, photography print; a fictional character, Taoky, in ceramic, exemplifies what Ortiz calls “Indigenous Futurisms.”





TOP LEFT: PHOTO BY UNGELBAH DAVILA

fascinated that many stories from the past find continuity with today. All across the country, craftspeople are prevailing over the challenges that invariably come their way, and longstanding traditions are being extended and transformed.

Take, for example, Virgil Ortiz. He began his career as a potter, drawing on the deep cultural well of Cochiti Pueblo, in New Mexico, where he was born and raised. While ceramics remains central for him, he works in other disciplines as well—film, fashion, jewelry and more. He picked up skills one after another, in what he describes as an organic process of development: “If I did not live close to an exhibition venue, I needed slides to present my work. So that led to photography. Then came magazine ads, so I taught myself graphic design. If I wanted a leather coat I had seen in a fashion magazine and could not possibly afford it, I taught myself how to sew. Each medium inspires another—it’s never-ending.”

Ortiz’s work is equally far-reaching in its content. For many years he has been creating imagery based on the Pueblo Revolt, a successful uprising of indigenous people against the Spanish that occurred in 1680. Most people in the U.S. have never heard of this “first American revolution,” as Ortiz calls it, and he has set himself the task of elevating awareness of it. He tells the story in a complex and highly imaginative way, interweaving elements from a parallel science fiction narrative set in the year 2180 in an effort to reach younger audiences. His pots and figural sculptures are populated by his own invented characters, yet at the same time, keep the tradition of Cochiti clay alive: a sophisticated mixture of past, present and future.

Unlike most Americans today, Ortiz was surrounded by craft as a child. He was born into a family of potters on his mother’s side, and his father was a drummer. “We were always surrounded by art, traditional ceremonies and dances,” he says. “I didn’t realize that art was being created daily in our household until I was about 11 years old. But I can definitely say that we had the best possible professors to teach us about traditional work.” When he was still young, Ortiz learned how to dig clay from the ground, process paint from plants, and fire pottery in an open pit, using cow manure, aspen and cedar for fuel. Having learned to use these methods and materials, he says, “it made every other medium seem a whole lot easier.”

It is tempting to imagine that, back in the day, all artisans had experiences like Ortiz’s and came easily to their trades. In fact, the picture is far more complicated. Certainly, there was a generally high level of material intelligence in the population. People understood how textiles were woven, furniture was built and metal was forged. Yet attaining a professional craft skill was not a straight-

forward proposition. The overall competency and self-sufficiency of Native Americans was regarded with considerable awe by white colonists, who generally lacked such capabilities. Guilds on the strict European model were nonexistent; in a young country defined by mobility, it was nearly impossible to impose consistent standards, or even keep artisans on the job. Young men were known to flee their indentures and apprenticeships before their terms were over, in order to set up their own shop and start earning—the most famous example being Benjamin Franklin, who went on to become a secular saint, the ultimate “self-made man.”

Yet this stereotype of the craftsman as an upwardly mobile, native-born white man is misleading. The majority of craftspeople throughout American history were immigrants, women and ethnic minorities. All faced prejudice and economic hardship. Immigrant artisans often came with superior skills,

because of their traditional training; but they tended to arouse suspicion and hostility among native-born workers, often to the point of physical violence. Women—half the population of skilled makers—were all but shut out of professional trades until the late 20th century. They had to practice their crafts informally at home, or while playing a supportive role in the family shop. Widows were an

important exception: They became prominent in trades like printing and cabinetmaking, which were otherwise male-dominated. Betsy Ross probably did not design the Stars and Stripes, as legend has it, but she did run an upholstery business for more than 50 years following the death of her first husband—a great achievement in a society that little rewarded women’s enterprise.

The craftspeople who have contended with the greatest obstacles have been Native Americans and African Americans. The indigenous experience of displacement is a tragedy beyond reckoning; just one of its consequences was disruption to long-established ways of making. It has required a tremendous force of cultural will on the part of generations of Native people, people like Virgil Ortiz, to maintain and rebuild those bonds of culture.

The brutal realities of enslavement and racism make the stories of black craftsmanship especially fraught and painful, all the more so because, in spite of what they faced, African American artisans literally built this country. The extent of their contribution is being gradually revealed through

**HE WANTS
HIS STUDENTS
TO “FEED
THEMSELVES
AND THEIR
FAMILIES
WITH WHAT
THEY ARE
LEARNING.”**



CONSTRUCTION ZONE A physics and engineering teacher at McClymonds High School in Oakland, California, Clayton Evans (top) is helping students build a better world in his innovative woodshop classes. Top right, frames made by students. Far right, senior Sidney Tchanyoum, who plays guitar, says she is eager to craft her own instrument. Center, above and below, Evans assists sophomore Christina Bryant. Left top, Tchanyoum adjusts part of a computer-controlled saw. Left above, student-crafted birdhouses.





archival research. Tiffany Momon, founder of the Black Craftspeople Digital Archive, has been a leading voice in this work; she and her colleagues comb through historical documents, looking for records of African American artisans and telling their stories. I asked her to explain what craft meant for black Americans in the 19th century. “Practicing a skilled trade provided enslaved craftspeople with some advantages,” she told me, “including the ability to, in some instances, earn wages and purchase themselves or their family members. The potential ability to buy oneself was undoubtedly a motivating factor for enslaved craftspeople to pursue and perfect their work. With the end of the Civil War, emancipation, and Reconstruction, you find that many formerly enslaved skilled craftspeople continued to practice their trades as freedpeople, enabling them to leave plantations for urban areas. They avoided the fate of many who ended up in exploitative sharecropping agreements with the former enslavers.”

Some of the most moving testimonies to black artisans’ lives are those they recorded themselves. The ceramics artist David Drake (often called “Dave the Potter”), who was born into slavery in Edgefield, South Carolina, inscribed his impressive large stor-

▲ In this legend, Betsy Ross sewed the Stars and Stripes in 1777 as George Washington looked on. But was her success running an upholstery firm a greater feat?

➤ A glass blower and helpers in 1908 at Seneca Glass Works, in West Virginia. In the U.S., early apprenticeships perpetuated craft skills until child labor laws intervened.



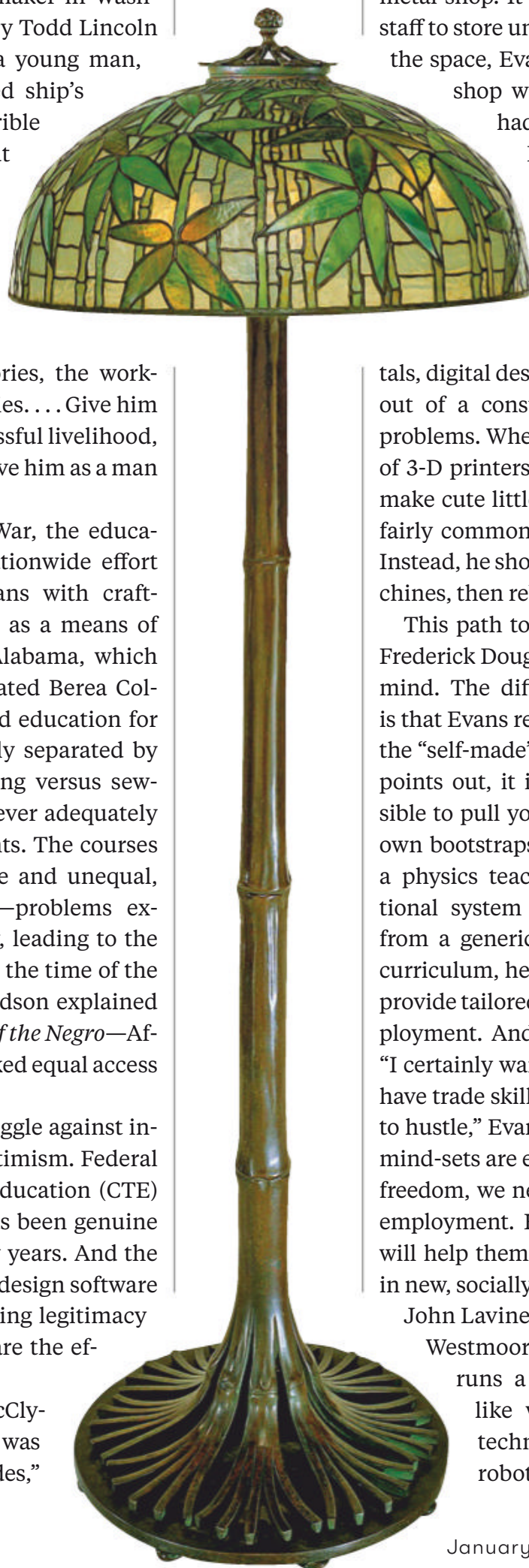
age vessels with poetic verses. One heartbreaking couplet seems to speak to enforced separation from his own family members, yet concludes in a gesture of universal goodwill: “I wonder where is all my relations / Friendship to all, and every nation.” The seamstress Elizabeth Keckley, who was born into slavery in Dinwiddie, Virginia, wrote in her autobiography, “I came upon the earth free in God-like thought, but fettered in action.” Yet she managed to become a much sought-after dressmaker in Washington, D.C. and a confidante of Mary Todd Lincoln in the Civil War White House. As a young man, Frederick Douglass was an enslaved ship’s caulker in Baltimore; he had terrible experiences during those years, but the future orator also drew deeply upon them in his later writings and spoke of artisan pride and opportunity. “Give him fair play and let him be,” Douglass wrote of the black artisan. “Throw open to him the doors of the schools, the factories, the workshops, and of all mechanical industries. . . . Give him all the facilities for honest and successful livelihood, and in all honorable avocations receive him as a man among men.”

In the years following the Civil War, the educator Booker T. Washington led a nationwide effort to provide young African Americans with craft-based training, which he described as a means of uplift. The Tuskegee Institute, in Alabama, which he founded, and the racially integrated Berea College, in Kentucky, offered craft-based education for boys and girls, though it was strictly separated by gender—carpentry and blacksmithing versus sewing and cookery. But these efforts never adequately addressed the needs of black students. The courses were often poor in quality, separate and unequal, with behind-the-times equipment—problems exacerbated with the rise of Jim Crow, leading to the segregation of schools like Berea. By the time of the Great Depression—as Carter G. Woodson explained in his 1933 book *The Mis-Education of the Negro*—African American craftspeople still lacked equal access to training and employment.

Educators today continue the struggle against inequality. There is some cause for optimism. Federal funding for Career and Technical Education (CTE) is the rare policy for which there has been genuine bipartisan support over the past few years. And the introduction of digital tools, such as design software and 3-D printers, brings forward-facing legitimacy to such classes. Above all, though, are the efforts of individual educators.

Clayton Evans is a teacher at McClymonds High School in Oakland. He was born in 1993—“after the death of trades,”

Reimagining an everyday object, Tiffany Studios of New York City produced this bronze and glass bamboo-themed lamp around 1900.



as he puts it—and had hardly any experience of making things by hand when he was growing up. After studying science and engineering in college, though, he came to see teaching as political work. Evans could be paraphrasing Douglass when he says he wants his students to “feed themselves and their families with what they are learning.”

He first went to McClymonds to teach physics, and immediately became curious about the old wood and metal shop. It was locked up, used by the janitorial staff to store unwanted items. But after getting inside the space, Evans realized it had “good bones”—the shop was wired with industrial voltage and had a stock of well-built old machines.

He set to work, clearing out the junk, teaching himself to repair and operate the equipment. Before long he was instructing about 100 kids each year. Evans teaches old and new techniques: woodwork and metalwork, engineering fundamentals, digital design. He encourages students to “break out of a consumer mentality” and actually solve problems. When his school managed to acquire a set of 3-D printers, he didn’t teach the students how to make cute little objects out of extruded plastic, as is fairly common in maker spaces across the country. Instead, he showed them how to disassemble the machines, then rebuild and customize them.

This path to self-reliance is connected to the one Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington had in mind. The difference, perhaps, is that Evans rejects the cliché of the “self-made” American. As he points out, it is literally impossible to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps (remember, he’s a physics teacher). The educational system must shift away from a generic, one-size-fits-all curriculum, he says, and instead provide tailored pathways to employment. And more than that: “I certainly want my students to have trade skills, and knowledge to hustle,” Evans says, “but their mind-sets are even more important to me. If we want freedom, we need to build lives beyond pathways to employment. Hopefully students’ time in my shop will help them build and sustain their communities in new, socially just economies.”

John Lavine, another CTE educator, who works at Westmoor High School in Daly City, California, runs a program teaching traditional skills like woodworking alongside new digital techniques such as laser engraving and robotics. His students are primarily of

**SOLE
OWNERSHIP
REPRESENTS
“A TRUER
FREEDOM
FOR BLACK
PEOPLE,”
SAYS
LACOUR.**





CHICAGO COUTURE Describing himself as “a ‘sneakerhead’ long before the phrase was ever coined,” Yohance Joseph Lacour learned leather-working and shoe-construction before founding his brand, YJL. Top left and above, Lacour works on a version of his Redemption Style sneaker, stitching the sole to the upper at the Chicago School of Shoemaking, where he sometimes teaches. Below, his company’s logo stamp. Bottom left, the YJL Safari model in what Lacour calls Special Ops (olive/black/white). Far left, the entrepreneur-artisan traces a pattern on leather. Left, a model carries a leather bag designed by Lacour.



Latino, Arab and Filipino background, from immigrant, working-class families. They are sometimes able to get well-paid jobs right out of school, or start their own businesses. If they attend college, they are likely to be the first in their families to do so. Lavine aims for such positive outcomes for his students, but it is by no means a certainty for every one of them. All he can do, he says, “is inspire and train, and help them see a way forward.”

This same ethos animates craft at the college level—among other places, at Berea, where the craft workshops are still in operation. Today the college has one of the most diverse student bodies in the nation, with all students attending tuition free, as part of a longstanding institutional commitment made possible in part by the college endowment. The workshop program has shifted to reflect this new reality. Last year, Berea College Student Craft invited Stephen Burks, a pioneering African American industrial designer based in New York City, to collaborate on the development of a new product line

under the title Crafting Diversity.

Burks has preserved the college’s traditional strengths, such as broom-making and basket weaving, while introducing bold new forms, patterns and colors: a broad palette, representing different perspectives. Students in the program have been encouraged to contribute their own design ideas to the project, and Burks has also devised clever ways for each object to be customized by the students, not just learning and solving problems as they work, but also infusing the results with their own personal creativity. The goal is not just to expand the symbolism of this storied craft program, but also to propel students into lifelong involvement with craft and design. This is one artisanal history that is being reimagined to suit the present day.

“WHERE I FEEL KINSHIP with craftspeople before me is the transformation of tragic circumstances: to make something positive from it.” These are the words of Yohance Joseph Lacour, a Chicago leather artist who is not just a skilled designer and maker but also a successful entrepreneur. Like so many black artisans in the past, he worked hard to get where he is today. Lacour spent nine years of his life in a federal prison in Duluth, Minnesota, eight of them making leatherwork. The craft began simply as a mental escape, but it soon became “a passion to create something from nothing,” he says. Initially, he learned skills from other inmates, some of whom had moved from one jail

to another for decades, picking up techniques on the way. Soon it was the other way around: He was inventing his own methods and teaching them to others.

Lacour has been out of prison for about three years and has devoted that time to building his own brand, YJL, making handbags and sneakers. His work reflects his prison experience—in those years he often had to work with scraps and developed an innovative style of collage construction—but his inspiration is primarily from the hip-hop scene that he knew growing up, with its emphasis on improvisation and reinvention. He is constantly developing new shapes, “making leather do things I haven’t seen leather do before,” he said. His viewpoint is unique. “I page through the fashion magazines looking for things I don’t see, bringing it back home to the streets, and taking what I know from the streets aesthetically and cosmically.”

Lacour’s business is growing so quickly that he is exploring the possibility of engaging a manufacturer to execute some of his designs. Lacour is keenly aware of the broader implications of these choices and of his place in a long lineage of black American luxury tradesmen, running back through the pioneer of 1980s hip-hop fashion, Dapper Dan, to the cobblers and seamstresses of the 19th century. He is aware, too, that his life experience reflects a tragic side of African American history, that the contemporary prison system replicates past oppression. (Lacour cites Michelle Alexander’s book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* as an important influence.) He has avoided outside investment. Sole ownership represents “a truer freedom for black people,” he says. “Until we have our own, we will forever be in a dependent state.”

I heard something similar from Margaret Wheeler. She is the founder of Mahota Textiles, based in Oklahoma—the first textile company in the nation owned by a Native American tribe. She shares Lacour’s perception about the intertwining of craft and self-determination. Wheeler, now 77 years old, is of Chickasaw heritage. Like Virgil Ortiz, she grew up in a house filled with crafts. Her mother and grandmother were constantly crocheting, knitting and embroidering, and she took up these skills early in life. For years, she did not think of fibers as her true creative work. But arriving at Pittsburg State University, in Kansas, in the late 1970s, she encountered some great teachers—including the experimental jeweler Marjorie Schick—who exposed her to the possibilities of metalwork and weaving as expressive disciplines.

Wheeler benefited from the surprisingly robust craft infrastructure of the American university system. In the years after World War II, courses in

BYLINES

Glenn Adamson, a historian and curator, is the author of *Craft: An American History*, to be published in January 2021 by Bloomsbury.



STRING THEORIES Though their aesthetics and fabrication techniques differ, these luthiers share a deep devotion to artisanship. Above, rock musician Chris DiPinto produces solid-body electric guitars in his Philadelphia workshop. Above right, plastic overlays give DiPinto instruments a retro feel. Far right, Michihiro Matsuda wields a plane to shape an acoustic guitar in his studio in Redwood City, California. Right and below, each Matsuda instrument is unique; some are enhanced by traditional Japanese lacquering.





weaving, ceramics and metalwork were widely available in higher education, mainly to accommodate returning soldiers seeking degrees through the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, popularly known as the G.I. Bill. That federal support went almost entirely to white men; they made up the majority of the armed forces, and the black and Native American soldiers who did serve often did not receive the benefits they were due. (Ira Katznelson tells the story in his pointedly titled book *When Affirmative Action Was White*.) Figures like Charles Loloma, a celebrated Hopi potter and jeweler who attended the School for American Craftsmen on the G.I. Bill, were the exception. It was not until the 1970s, in the wake of the civil rights era and contemporaneous red power movement, that craft courses in American universities started to become more ethnically inclusive.

After completing her degree, Wheeler became a teacher and then, in 1984, took up weaving full time. She showed her work at Native-oriented museums in the Southwest and presented her work at Indian markets and in fashion shows. She also has

■
A major force in the midcentury craft movement, the philanthropist Aileen Osborn Webb goes for a spin in her Garrison, New York, pottery studio in 1976.
♥

experience as a designer for the theater, on one occasion creating the costumes for an all-Chickasaw musical production. Despite her success, it was only thanks to the entrepreneurial spirit and financial backing of her tribe that Wheeler was able to set up Mahota. The company, which specializes in blankets and also makes bags and pillows, is named for her great-great-great-grandmother, who suffered forced removal from ancestral land in the 1830s and '40s. Even at that early time, indigenous crafts were subjected to a perverse double threat: on the one hand, disrupted by violent assault and displacement; on the other, fetishized as emblems of nostalgia and distorted through the operations of a tourist economy. This troubled history helps explain why, despite the rich tradition of weaving among the Chickasaw and other tribes, it had taken so long for a company like Mahota to exist.

Wheeler's designs reflect a more affirmative aspect of the past, emulating motifs from ancient Mississippian mound-building cultures, as well as more recent traditions of featherwork, beading and quillwork.



Together with Mahota's business and development manager, Bethany McCord, and the design and operations coordinator, Taloa Underwood, Wheeler has made the leap to factory production. Rather than using hand looms, they collaborate with a custom industrial mill called MTL, in Jessup, Pennsylvania. In addition to the technical advantages this provides—the digital loom literally weaves circles around a traditional loom, executing curves that would be difficult to achieve by hand—it allows them to take on large upholstery commissions and, most important, sell their products for an affordable price. But Wheeler remains a hand weaver at heart. "It's impossible," she says, "to understand the structure of the cloth without getting deeply involved in its production."

BEGINNING IN THE 1940S, a wealthy New York City philanthropist named Aileen Osborn Webb tirelessly worked to build a national craft movement, with its own dedicated council, museum, conferences, school, magazine and network of regional affiliates. Webb's impact at that time was profound. It was principally thanks to her, and those she rallied to her banner at the American Craft Council, that the studio craft movement flourished in the decades after World War II. While it was a period of prosperity for the country, Webb and her allies were dismayed by what they perceived to be the conformity and poor quality of manufactured goods. Looking to Scandinavia, Italy and Japan, they saw exemplars of a more humanistic, authentic approach. It was not lost on Webb that all of these other countries retained large artisan work forces, and she hoped to foster the same here in the United States.

The problem was that—unlike today—the general population in America saw little value in craft per se. Denmark's most representative company in these years was the silversmithing firm Georg Jensen. Italy had the skilled glass blowers on the island of Murano. Japan was setting up its Living National Treasure program in the crafts. What did the U.S. have? The auto industry, with its enormous assembly line factories—an economic wonder of the world, and a model for every other branch of manufacturing. What could an individual artisan contribute in the face of that? Webb and her allies did have an answer for this, which they borrowed to some extent from Scandinavia. They called it the "designer-craftsman" approach. The theory was that prototypes would be skillfully crafted by hand, and only then replicated en masse. The problem was that American businesses just weren't interested. It wasn't so much that

READ MORE ABOUT *the Berea College broomcraft program at [Smithsonianmag.com/brooms](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/brooms)*



Born a slave in Virginia in 1818, Elizabeth Keckley became a highly successful dressmaker in Washington, D.C., a friend of Mary Todd Lincoln and an author.

handcraft had no place in their affairs—after all, cars were designed using full-scale clay models. It was the underlying aesthetic of individualism for which manufacturers had little use. Good design might have a certain value, if only for marketing purposes. But the creative vision of an artisan? Where was a corporate executive supposed to put that on a balance sheet?

In the 1960s, the counterculture infused craft with a new attitude, positioning it as an explicit means of opposition to heartless enterprise. Meanwhile, American industry churned along, more or less indifferent to craft, except insofar as management sought to undermine skilled-trades unions. This state of affairs persisted until the 21st century. What finally brought a change seems to have been the internet.

Digital technology is in some ways as far from handwork as it's possible to get: fast, frictionless, immaterial. Seemingly in response, however, a vogue for crafted goods has arisen. Ethical considerations—a concern for the environment, workers' rights and the value of buying local—have dovetailed with a more general yearning for tactility and real human connection. At the same time, ironically, digital tools have made small craft enterprises more viable. Online selling platforms turn out to be ideal for telling stories about production, which makes for great marketing copy.



NARRATIVE THREADS The first textile firm solely owned by a Native American tribe, Mahota belongs to members of the Chickasaw nation, and its goods draw on Chickasaw themes. Above, Margaret Roach Wheeler, an award-winning artist and a teacher who founded the company, works at a loom in Sulphur, Oklahoma; the name Mahota has been in her family for generations. Above right, a blanket pays homage to sweetgrass and basketry. Far right, a handbag. Right, design and operations coordinator Taloa Underwood. Below, an eagle blanket. Tribes of the Southeast revere the bird for its power and for flying closest to the Creator.





This is not a foolproof formula. Disappointed sellers on Etsy, the internet marketplace for makers, have criticized the company for unfulfilled economic promises, and the parody site Regretsy (slogan: “where DIY meets WTF”), founded in 2009 by April Winchell, showcased egregious examples of craft-gone-wrong. (She closed it after three years, telling *Wired* magazine, “I’ve said everything I have to say about it, and now we’re just Bedazzling a dead horse.”) With a little hindsight, though, it is clear that communications technology has indeed given the artisan economy a new lease of economic life. It’s now possible to build a business that closely resembles an 18th-century workshop—plus an Instagram feed.

A case in point is the Pretentious Craft Company, based in Knoxville, Tennessee. Founder Matthew Cummings started selling his custom-made glasses on Etsy in 2012 strictly as a “side hustle.” He had gone to art school and thought of himself as a sculptor. But he was also an aficionado of craft beer—one of the artisan success stories of the past decade—and would get together with friends to sample the offerings of a few small breweries. One week, he turned up with handmade glasses, calibrated for maximum enjoyment. As their enjoyment neared its maximum, one of his friends broke down laughing: “Dude, this is so f---ing pretentious.”

The name stuck. Cummings launched the business with just \$500 of start-up money—for a while, he bartered his own labor as a gaffer, or skilled glass blower, to get hours of furnace time. At once participating in the microbrewery phenomenon and gently mocking its clichés, Cummings began selling 20 or 30 glasses a month, expanding into the hundreds after he was featured on some larger websites. He moved into his present premises, designed to exacting specifications: shaving off even ten seconds per piece can make a noticeable difference in the bottom line. While everything is still made by hand, albeit using molds, the volume is high, with six skilled blowers at work. Wanting to know more about beer so he could make a better glass, Cummings started a brewery, now its own business venture, Pretentious Beer. Does he miss being a full-time artist? Not much. “Instead of making sculpture my friends and family couldn’t afford, and I couldn’t afford myself,” Cummings says, “I’m making something others can enjoy and interact with on a daily basis. A \$35 glass, or a \$5 beer, is still an expression of my creativity.” Then too, the prominence of the company allows the team to make ambitious one-off glasses—“the most complicated shapes we can imagine”—which are auctioned online.

Cummings admits that none of the decisions he has made have been strictly about profit: “I have an MFA, not an MBA.” It’s clear the camaraderie of the workshop is the thing he cares about most. That

such an undertaking can exist at all, much less find success, says a lot about contemporary America, and the communities of making that can take root here.

The furniture workshop of Chris Schanck, in northeast Detroit, is situated in a squat cinder-block structure, formerly a small tool-and-die company that serviced a nearby General Motors plant.

Built up a century ago, when the auto industry was revving its economic engines, the neighborhood where Schanck works fell on hard times in the 1970s. There are abandoned houses, and city services are erratic at best. In the last few years, though, the area's residual proficiency at making stuff—and the cheap rents—have attracted creative types. Schanck has an MFA, from Cranbrook Academy of Art, located in the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Hills. While a student there, he developed the technique he calls “alufoil.”

**WHEREVER
YOU GO IN THE
U.S., COUNTRY
OR CITY,
NORTH OR
SOUTH, RED
STATE OR BLUE,
YOU WILL FIND
MAKERS.**

It begins with an armature, built by hand, which he covers with ordinary kitchen foil. A coat of resin makes the object sturdy, and also brings out the gleam in the aluminum. Schanck has been experimenting and refining the technique.

As Schanck became successful, he needed help. Lots of help. Gradually, his studio has become a sort of community center, with an ethnically diverse crew. Former art stu-

dents work alongside women from the local Bangladeshi population. (“Welcome to Banglatown,” a neighborhood sign says.) Visit the studio on most days, and you will meet seven women sitting round a large table, placing and polishing bits of shining foil. Their head scarves, shot through with metallic threads, seem almost to declare allegiance to the cause.

Schanck thinks a lot about this business, the livelihoods that depend on it, and the terms on which they are all sustained. When his work is shipped to a New York gallery or to a design fair, the creative energies of the Detroit neighborhood are released into the market. Resources flow back in return, and the cycle keeps going. As amazing as his furniture is to look at, once you see where it is made—this space, with its lively atmosphere of conversation and creativity—the thought may occur that his shop is the true work of art.

ONE OF THE THINGS that has made Schanck's studio successful is his willingness to take on commissions, which constitute as much as 70 percent of his output. Alongside his purely speculative designs, he has made numerous

CONTINUED ON PAGE 112



BUILDING COMMUNITY blkHaUS Studios in Chicago creates novel settings where people can gather. Above, Norman Teague reviews a design for a 2016 installation in the city's Burnham Wildlife Corridor. Top, Folayemi Wilson collects willow branches in Indiana. Upper right, branches arrive at the historic Pullman factory, where Teague and others construct monuments (using methods shared by furniture maker Dave Chapman). Right, the structures, now complete, are carried to the site. Top right, Teague and Wilson (and Chris Buchakjian on smartphone).





INSPIRING AWE *in* ALASKA

IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES ALONG THE COAST, A LIVELY ARTISTIC

photographs by
FERNANDO DECILLIS

text by
KIMBERLY R. FULTON OROZCO

MOVEMENT DRAWS ON INNOVATION AND HUMOR AS WELL AS TRADITION



NATHAN JACKSON, a Chilkoot Sockeye clan leader, found his way back to his heritage circuitously after a boyhood spent at a boarding school that prohibited native languages and practices. A carver of monumental art, he works with a tool, above, called an adze. Above right, Jackson, who also goes by Yéil Yádi, his Tlingit name, carves a cedar panel depicting an eagle carrying a salmon in its talons. Inset at right, a raven helmet, inlaid with abalone shell. Previous page: At the Totem Heritage Center in Ketchikan, Alaska, Jackson wears ceremonial blankets and a headdress made from ermine pelts, cedar, abalone shell, copper and flicker feathers.



AMONG THE INDIGENOUS NATIONS of Southeast Alaska, there is a concept known in Haida as *Íitl' Kuníisii*—a timeless call to live in a way that not only honors one's ancestors but takes care to be responsible to future generations.

The traditional arts of the Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian people are integral to that bond, honoring families, clans, and animal and supernatural beings, and telling oral histories through totem poles, ceremonial clothing and blankets, hand-carved household items and other objects. In recent decades, native artisans have revived practices that stretch back thousands of years, part of a larger movement to counter threats to their cultural sovereignty and resist estrangement from their heritage.

They use materials found in the Pacific rainforest and along the coast: red cedar, yellow cedar, spruce roots, seashells, animal skins, wool, horns, rock. They have become master printmakers, producing bold-colored figurative designs in the distinctive style known as “formline,” which prescribes the placement of lines, shapes and colors. Formline is a visual language of balance, movement, storytelling, ceremony, legacy and legend, and through it, these artisans bring the traditions of their rich cultures into the present and ensure their place in the future.





ALISON BREMNER / COURTESY STEINBRUECK / NATIVE GALLERY (2)

ALISON BREMNER apprenticed with the master carver David A. Boxley, a member of the Tsimshian tribe. She is thought to be the first Tlingit woman to carve and raise a totem pole, a feat she accomplished in her hometown, Yakutat, Alaska. Now based in Juneau, she creates woodcarvings, paintings, mixed-media sculpture, ceremonial clothing, jewelry, digital collage and formline prints. Her work is notable for wit and pop culture references, such as a totem pole with an image of her grandfather holding a thermos, or a paddle bearing a tiny nude portrait of Burt Reynolds in his famous 1970s beefcake pose. Below, a silkscreen titled *Decaf/Regular*.





SGWAAYAANS, a Kaigani Haida artist, carved his first totem pole at age 19. Last year, he made his first traditional canoe, from a red cedar estimated to be 300 years old. Once the canoe was carved, it was taken outside to a lot near the Hydaburg River. Above, heated lava rocks were lowered into a saltwater bath inside it, to steam the vessel until it was pliable enough to be stretched crosswise with thwarts. Haida community members then carried the canoe back to the carving shed. Historically, the Haida were famous for their giant hand-carved canoes; a single vessel was known to carry 60 people or ten tons of freight.





MÍJUU WAY

SUN





LILY HOPE, a designer of Chilkat and Ravenstail textiles, lives in Juneau with her five children. She is seen weaving Tlingit masks during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hope is well known for her ceremonial robes, woven from mountain goat wool and cedar bark, and often made for clan members commemorating a major event like a birth, or participating in the mortuary ceremony known as *Ku.éex*, held one year after a clan member's death. An educator and a community leader, Hope also receives "repatriation commissions" from institutions that return a historical artifact to its clan of origin and replace it with a replica or an original artwork.

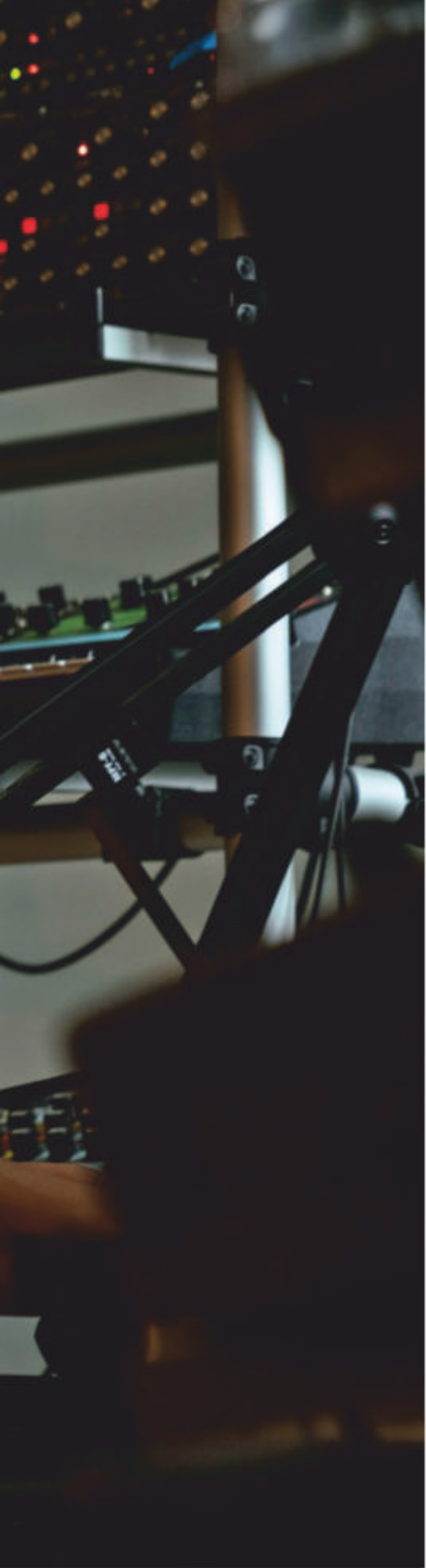


BYLINES

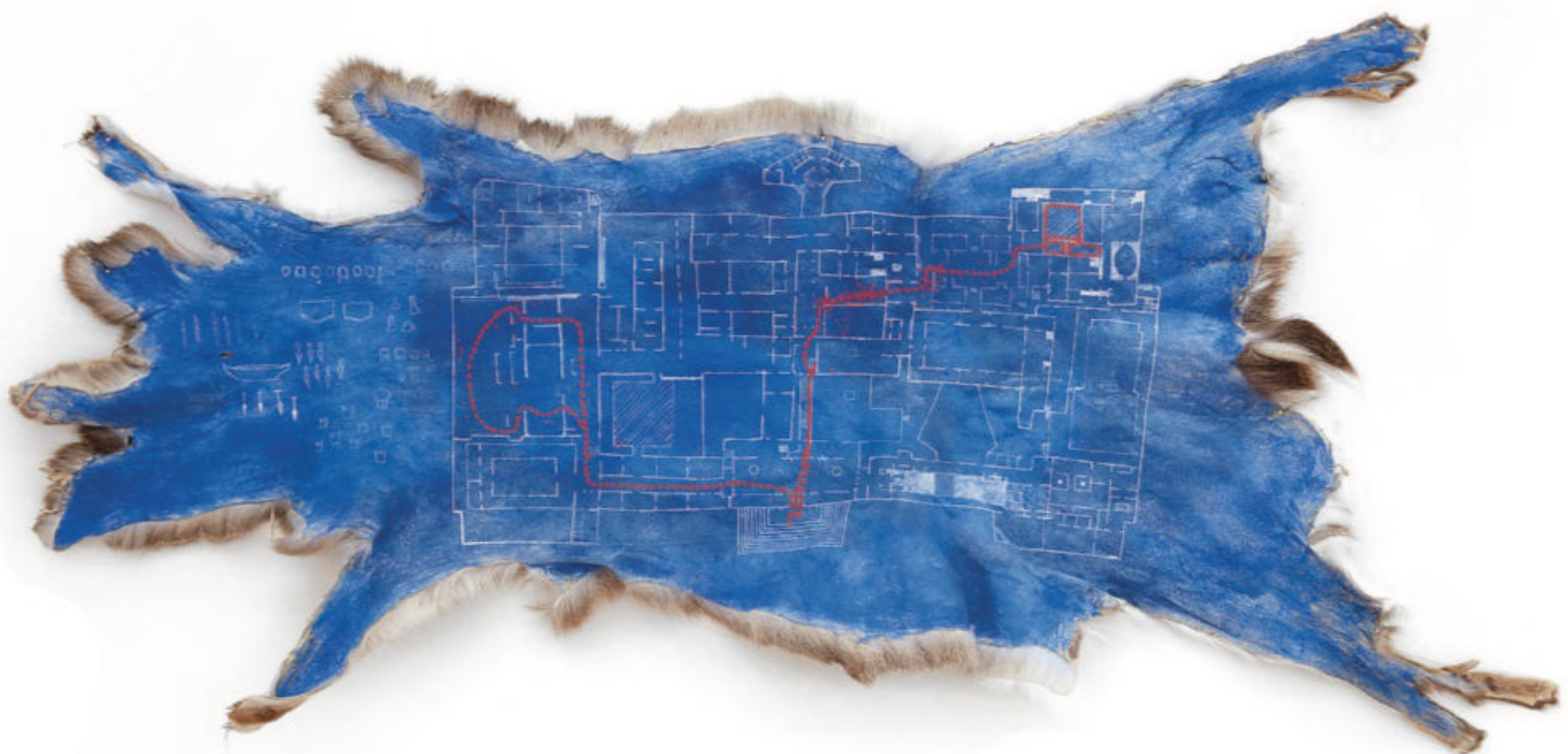
Fernando Decillis photographed the annual Scopes Festival in Dayton, Tennessee, for *Smithsonian*.

Kimberly R. Fulton Orozco, a descendant of the Kaigani Haida nation, is a photography producer in Atlanta.





NICHOLAS GALANIN, a Sitka-based artist and musician, draws on his native heritage to create conceptual artworks that diverge from tradition while also commenting on it. Examples include ceremonial masks carved from anthropology textbooks and a totem pole covered in the same wallpaper as the gallery wall on which it hangs, causing it to nearly disappear. Below, *Architecture of Return, Escape* (Metropolitan Museum of Art), is his map of the Met on a deer hide. It shows in red paint where the “Art of Native America” exhibition’s 116 artworks are located and suggests a route for them to “escape” from the museum and “return” to their original homes. ♦



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND PETER BLUM GALLERY, NEW YORK, 2020

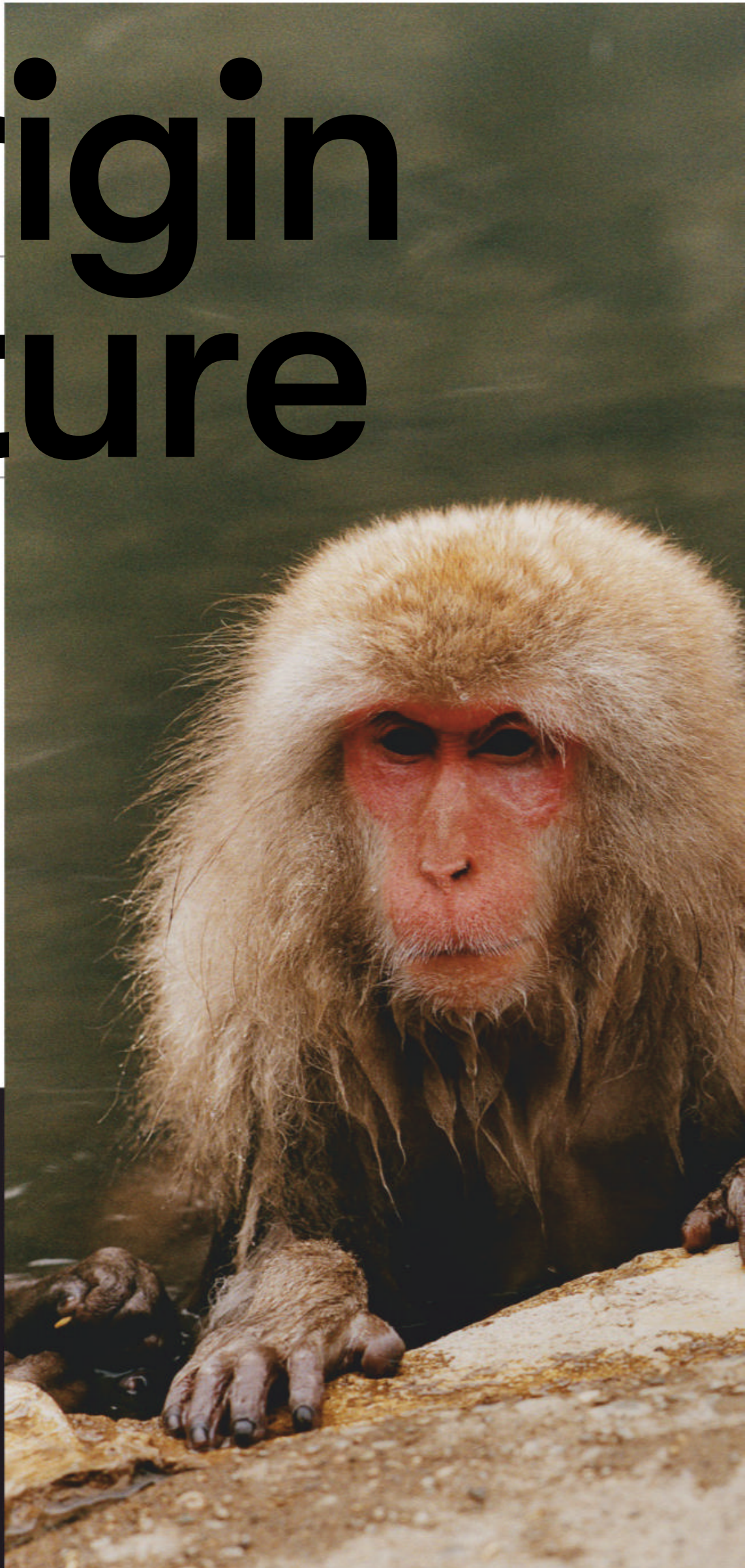
ON THE **O** rigin OF **C** ulture

**Wild monkeys
in Japan are
teaching scientists
how animals
develop valuable
skills—and pass
them to the next
generation**

BY **BEN CRAIR**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MACIEK POŻOGA

ニホンザル





Two Japanese macaques—a female, left, and a male—at Jigokudani, the only spot where nonhuman primates are known to bathe in hot springs.

A female macaque relaxes at Jigokudani. The Japanese word means “hell’s valley,” after the volcanic activity that heats the springs.



The “Snow Monkey Express” was almost empty when I rode with a few other tourists from Nagano to the last stop in Yamanouchi, a town of 12,400. A banner welcomed us to the “Snow Monkey Town,” and signs in the station showed red-faced Japanese macaques soaking up to their necks in hot-spring water. The monkeys closed their eyes and stretched their arms as steam rose around them and snowflakes settled in the dry fur on their heads.

After the long day of travel, I decided to take a dip myself in one of the town’s *onsen* baths. I lowered myself into the scalding sulfuric water and thought of similar bathing experiences I’d had in other places: the fragrant moist heat of the Russian *banya* or the Indian Ayurvedic steam bath in its coffinlike booth. Over the centuries, people worldwide have differentiated the simple practice of bathing into many elaborate forms. Japanese primatologists were the first to ask whether animals have developed rituals of their own.

The snow monkeys are one of several groups of Japanese macaques that have changed the way we see animals and ourselves.



Macaques gravitate toward the warm water during the winter. Park attendants lure them with food so visitors can see them the rest of the year.

They’ve helped us to recognize the true complexity of animal behavior—and, in doing so, offered insight into the evolutionary origins of ours. I planned to visit several of these monkey troops throughout Japan and started with this “Snow Monkey Town” because, well, its monkeys were the cutest.

The next morning, I walked several miles through the



**“When an experience of an individual
is transmitted to the next generation,
it is called a culture.”**

forest to the Jigokudani Monkey Park, where a sign for a “monkey onsen” pointed over a footbridge. The pool steamed on the edge of a cliff over the Yokoyu River, and a single monkey sat at its center, an old female with a long muzzle and round amber eyes. She was one of about 40 macaques who sometimes used the bath. Other monkeys were squabbling over the grain that workers at the monkey park had spread on the riverbank and mountainside.

The photos I’d seen before the trip gave an impression of relaxed little animals, but the scene was anything but Zen. Scientists describe Japanese macaque societies as “despotic” and “nepotistic.” Every monkey in a given group had a place in a linear dominance hierarchy, one for males and one for females, and they constantly displaced inferiors to reinforce their rank. The monkeys were vigilant as they picked grain from the snow, constantly look-

ing over their shoulders to keep tabs on their neighbors: A higher-ranking monkey might drag them by the leg or sink its teeth into their neck.

As mealtime wound down, the monkeys began to groom each other—their way to not only eliminate parasites but also placate a superior or form an alliance. A few juveniles jumped into the onsen, while adult females waded in more carefully. I crouched in front of a female macaque, who gripped a rock with both hands and plunged her hindquarters underwater. Her adolescent son squatted behind her while her infant daughter paddled by her side. The son combed through her fur, first with his left hand and then his right, working through her gray undercoat to the white skin and eating the morsels he found inside. The mother closed her bluish eyelids and rested her red cheek on the rock between her hands. Her name was Tomiko, a park worker told

>
On Koshima island is a 14-year-old male monkey the researchers call Gure. A male Japanese macaque can live up to 28 years.

Nelson Broche Jr., a doctoral student at Kyoto University's Primate Research Institute, feeds monkeys on Koshima, where the animals are closely studied.





Both scientists and locals had been watching the Jigokudani monkeys for years, but no one had seen them enter the water until that moment. Within a few months, bathing was popular with the younger monkeys in the group. It was more than just a fad. Their babies learned to swim as well. Eventually, a third of all monkeys in the troop were bathing. In 1967, the park had to build a dedicated monkey onsen nearby for hygienic reasons, to make sure they weren't bathing with humans.

"Monkey see, monkey do" is usually a derisive phrase for learning by imitation, but scientists at Jigokudani believed they were witnessing something profound. They were disciples of Kinji Imanishi, an ecologist and anthropologist who co-founded the Primate Research Institute in 1967. While Western scientists viewed life as a Darwinian struggle for survival, Imanishi believed harmony undergirded nature, and that culture was one expression of this harmony. He predicted you would find a simple form of culture in any animals that lived in a "perpetual social group" where individuals learned from one another and stayed together over many generations. Anthropologists had never paid attention to animals

because most of them assumed "culture" was strictly a human endeavor. Starting in the 1950s, Imanishi's students at Jigokudani and other sites across Japan discovered that was not the case.

NOWADAYS CULTURES HAVE BEEN recognized not just in monkeys but in various mammals, birds and even fish. Like people, animals rely on social customs and traditions to preserve important behaviors that individuals do not know by instinct and cannot figure out on their own. The spread of these behaviors is determined by the animals' social relationships—the ones they spend time with and the ones they avoid—and it varies among groups. Researchers have tallied nearly 40 different behaviors in chimpanzees that they deemed to be cultural, from

me. "Tomiko very like onsen," he explained.

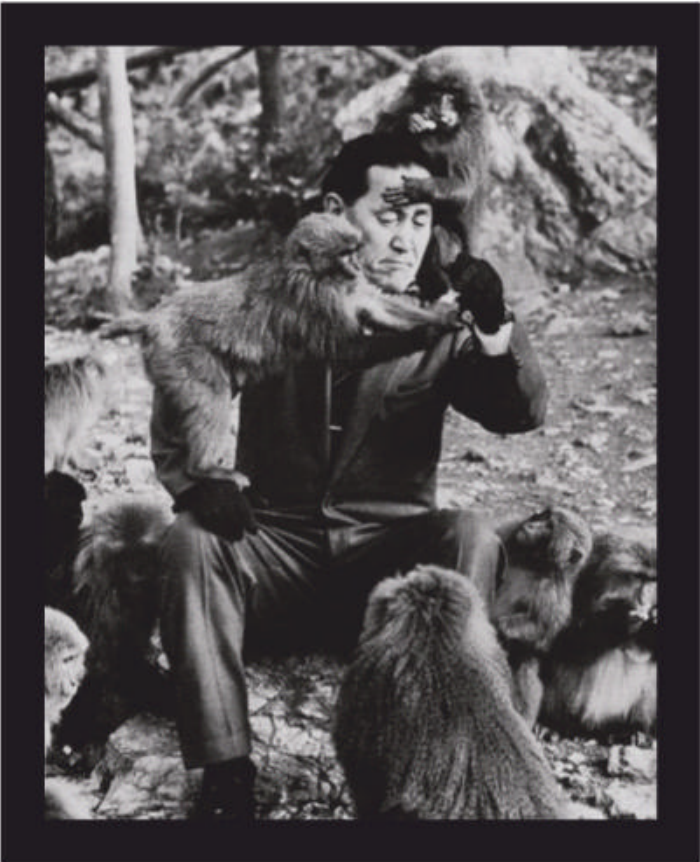
Monkeys like Tomiko started to bathe at the onsen at Jigokudani nearly 60 years ago. "I was the first to see them go in," a retired professor named Kazuo Wada from the Primate Research Institute at Kyoto University told me. The year was 1963, he said, and he was studying the monkeys at Jigokudani. The park at that time provisioned a group of 23 monkeys with apples near an outdoor onsen for guests of a local *ryokan*, a traditional Japanese inn. The monkeys avoided the water until one day, an apple rolled into the bath. "A monkey went after it and realized it was warm," Wada recalled. The monkey took another dip a few minutes later. Young monkeys watching from the edge became curious and soon tried the onsen for themselves.

"Japanese culture does not emphasize the difference between people and animals."



a group in Guinea that cracks nuts to another in Tanzania that dances in the rain. Sperm whale scientists have identified distinct vocal clans with their own dialects of clicks, creating what one scientist called “multicultural areas” in the sea.

Culture is so important to some animals that Andrew Whiten, an evolutionary and developmental psychologist at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, has called it a “second inheritance system” alongside genetics. And when animals disappear, so



Kinji Imanishi, pictured at the Japan Monkey Centre in 1963, pioneered behavioral research years before Western primatologists like Jane Goodall.

Nelson Broche Jr. at the Koshima Field Station. His research involves collecting and measuring stress hormones in the saliva of Japanese macaques.

Takafumi Suzumura, a researcher from the Kyoto University Wildlife Research Center, attracts a crowd on Koshima.

do the cultures they have evolved over generations. Conservation programs can sometimes reintroduce new animals to a habitat, but these newcomers know none of the cultural behaviors of their predecessors. In 2019, the journal *Science* published two papers arguing that conservation efforts have traditionally overlooked the impact of human activity on behavioral and cultural diversity in animals. The authors





CULTURE CLUB
Left, Koshima macaques wash sweet potatoes. Imanishi's team observed when this behavior started with one monkey in the 1950s. Washing caught on with others and was then practiced down the generations—a vivid example of cultural transmission in a nonhuman species. Below, Broche dangles a rope smeared with peanut butter so monkeys will chew on the knot and he can collect their saliva.



of one paper urged the creation of “cultural heritage sites” for chimpanzees, orangutans and whales.

The papers did not mention Japanese macaques, which are not a threatened species. But the proposal of cultural heritage sites for animals made me think immediately of Japan, where Imanishi and his students had learned to recognize animal cultures in the first place. I headed from Jigokudani to the most storied of their field sites, an island called Koshima, my next destination.

From Jigokudani, I passed through Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, and rode an old bus down the Pacific coast. Small homes hid behind their gardens on the roadside, and mountains rose to embrace the water in round blue bays. The region had once been popular with Japanese honeymooners, but its golden age ended when it became easy to fly to places like Hawaii. I got off the bus by the field station that had been established in 1967 by the Primate Research Institute and is now managed by Kyoto University.

An American student named Nelson Broche Jr. met me at the bus stop. He was studying acute stress in Japanese macaques at the Koshima Field Center. “One thing people don't give macaques credit for is they're the most successful primates after humans,” he told me. You can find different

species of macaques throughout all of Asia, including in the hearts of massive cities like Delhi. Japanese macaques have adapted to nearly every natural habitat in the country, from the snowy mountains of Jigokudani to the subtropical forests on Kyushu.

Broche introduced me to Takafumi Suzumura, who has been working on Koshima for the university for 18 years. We walked to the water, and they pointed to Koshima, a lump of green forest in a calm turquoise sea. It was so close that surfers could swim there. We paid a fisherman to pilot us around the rocky shoreline to a hidden inlet with a beach.

The monkeys were waiting on the sand, like survivors of a shipwreck. They started to coo and whir as soon as we appeared. “This means, ‘Give me food,’” Suzumura said. The alpha male Shika strutted up to Suzumura with his tail pointed in the air and chased away any other monkey who got too near. Unlike the monkeys at Jigokudani, which had been completely indifferent to humans, some of the monkeys on Koshima growled and charged if I got close. Suzumura told me to hold my ground, avoid eye contact and not to worry. “They never bite,” he said.

Imanishi and his students arrived on the same beach in 1948. They were looking for evidence of “pre-culture” in



The coast of Yakushima. Farmers on the island have used various methods, both lethal and nonlethal, to keep monkeys away from their crops.



◀ A trail map of Yakushima, a popular destination. The island attracts some 300,000 visitors a year and is home to the remnants of an ancient forest.

animals, some fundamental process that might also be the evolutionary root of humans' diverse and sophisticated societies. Their goal was to research how "a simple behavioral mechanism has developed into a higher complex one," wrote Syunzo Kawamura, a student of Imanishi's. They started their research nearby on semi-wild horses and switched to monkeys after they noticed how well-organized their troop was. They met a local teacher named Satsue Mito, who was familiar with the monkeys of Koshima. In 1952, she helped them provision 20 monkeys with grain and sweet potatoes on forest trails and the beach.

It was unusual for researchers to feed wild animals, but there were a lot of things unusual about the research Imanishi planned. He needed to make the monkeys tolerant of human observers, so they could identify every individual animal and make detailed observations on their behavior and social relationships over multiple generations. It would be another decade before Western scientists like Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey started to look at monkeys this way. Most Western scientists had been drilled to never anthropomorphize animals. They gave them alphanumeric identities instead of names and hadn't undertaken long-term observations: They thought individual animals were interchangeable and lacked the minds for complex social relationships.

Pushed too far, anti-anthropomorphism started to resemble another well-known bias: anthropocentrism, or the belief that humans occupy a unique place at the center of the world. Modern Western science developed in societies with ancient beliefs about human's supremacy over animals, the Dutch primatologist Frans de Waal has noted. The religious traditions in Japan, by contrast, gave humans no special status. "Japanese culture does not emphasize the difference between people and

animals,” the Japanese primatologist Junichiro Itani once wrote. “We feel that this has led to many important discoveries.”

AFTER THE MONKEYS had finished the grain from Suzumura on Koshima, they started grooming on the beach. They relaxed into unself-conscious poses. Some flopped lengthwise on the sand while a companion hunched over them, like Orpheus mourning Eurydice. Others lay limp over rocks like sacrificial victims. One watched me coyly over her shoulder; another, haughtily down her nose. Mothers held their infants to their breasts in the manner of every Madonna and child I had ever seen.

While I tried to get as close to the monkeys as possible with my smartphone camera, Suzumura collected feces samples from the sand with a pair of chopsticks. He kept detailed records of every monkey on the island. He could identify each of them, telling you its name, age, social rank, matriline and personality. The records stretched all the way back to Imanishi’s time, tracing the life history of every individual monkey on Koshima for over 70 years. Cumulatively, they showed how some monkey families had risen to dom-

Three adults gawk at passersby on a busy road. Japanese macaques usually walk on all fours and can leap as far as 16 feet.



inance while others had disappeared. Imanishi and his students were the first to realize that monkeys maintained close alliances with relatives throughout their lives—hence were “nepotistic.” It was exactly the type of complex social order from which Imanishi predicted culture would emerge.

Imanishi and his team had been on Koshima for five years when one day they watched a 1½-year-old monkey named Imo take a sweet potato and carry it to the edge of a stream. She dipped the potato in the water and wiped the sand from its skin. It may have tasted better that way, because she continued to clean her potatoes. The first monkeys to copy Imo were two who spent a lot of time near her: her mother and a playmate.



On Yakushima, a sika deer passes a gathering on Seiburindou Road. Macaques live in troops of 20 or more, depending on how much food is available.

WHERE THE MONKEYS ARE

Three major habitats of the remarkably adaptable Japanese macaque. In the north, it lives in mountainous subarctic forests. On the southern islands, it thrives in a subtropical climate.



as well as females, learning sweet-potato washing from its mother. Age and sex were no longer factors. “Pre-cultural pressure is working,” Kawai wrote. A new behavior had become fixed within the troop.

By 1961, most of the monkeys had switched from washing their potatoes in the stream to the sea. This may have been because the sea’s water was more plentiful, though scientists thought they might like the flavor of the saltwater better: Some dipped the potato after every bite.

I had hoped to watch the current population of monkeys on Koshima wash their sweet potatoes, but Suzumura now fed them sweet potatoes only once or twice a year. The original group of 20 monkeys grew to 120 by 1971. In 1972, the Primate Research Institute switched to provisioning only with grain. The cultural impact of sweet-potato washing was still

Soon her relatives tried it too, and their playmates copied them in turn. Sweet-potato washing became the rage among younger monkeys. By 1958, 15 of the 19 juvenile monkeys were washing their potatoes.

Masao Kawai, another of Imanishi’s students, described this phase as “pre-cultural propagation.” Imo had innovated a new behavior that spread to her peers. Age and sex both influenced its transmission: Younger monkeys and females were more likely to learn potato washing than adult monkeys and males. The next stage began when Imo and her peers matured and reproduced. Now the behavior spread to the next generation with every new baby, males

visible on Koshima, however. The fastidious little Imo had developed another new behavior that spread quickly through the group: She separated wheat from sand by throwing it in the water. The grain floated and the sediment sank. (Some of the monkeys still wash their wheat, Suzumura said, but none did when I visited.) And babies whose mothers carried them into the water during potato washings started to swim during playtime, something their elders had never done.

Before Imanishi’s team arrived, the monkeys spent nearly all their time in the forest. Now they were also spending much of their time on the beach and had learned a new repertoire of behaviors. “Since the scientists first started feeding the macaques on Koshima island, a whole new life style has developed,” the Israeli researchers Eva Jablonka and Eytan Avital wrote. They called it an example of “cumulative cultural evolution.” Kawai was surprised by how quickly the monkeys adapted to the beach, given their initial aversion to the water. “We learn through the Koshima troop that once that strong traditional conservatism began to break down by some cause or others, it can easily be removed,” he wrote.

BYLINES

Ben Crair, a frequent *Smithsonian* contributor, lives in Berlin. He last wrote about Alcatraz.

Maciek Pożoga, based in France, spent two weeks photographing Japanese macaques for this story.

The monkeys lounged on the beach for several hours when I visited. It was afternoon when the temperature started to drop, and they disappeared into the forest to forage. The empty beach might have appeared underwhelming compared with “cultural heritage sites” in the human world, like palaces and cathedrals. The monkeys hadn’t built anything that looked like architecture, not even a sand castle. What Koshima showed us, however, was that culture was not a product. It was a process. Step by step, the lives of the monkeys at Koshima had started to look different from the lives of other monkeys—and, at the same time, started to appear a little more like our own.

I HAD TO CHOOSE where to go after Koshima. There were other sites that could qualify as cultural heritage for Japanese macaques. At Arashiyama near Kyoto, some monkeys started to play with stones in the 1970s and the behavior spread in the same pattern as sweet-potato washing at Koshima and bathing at Jigokudani: first horizontally among peers and then from one generation to the next. The scientist who first observed the behavior, an American named Michael Huffman now at the Primate Research Institute, noticed different groups of monkeys developing their own ways of handling stones over time. In some groups, the monkeys rubbed the stones together; in others, they cuddled the stones or banged them on the ground.

But I was curious to see monkeys that had never been fed by people. The Japanese researchers realized the new behaviors at places like Koshima, Jigokudani and Arashiyama weren’t exactly natural. The scientists themselves had sparked their development through feeding, which brought the animals into unfamiliar habitats and gave them downtime to try out new behaviors. Feeding also affected the life of the group in other ways. “In the feeding places, the relations among males was very clear. One is dominant, another is subordinate,” Yukimaru Sugiyama, a former scientist from the Primate Research Institute, told me. When he followed monkeys into the forest, however, young males often sat near the same dominant monkeys they had avoided at the feeding site.

As researchers became more interested in the natural lives of the primates, they learned to habituate them simply by following them. The primates ran away at first but many eventually lost their fear of humans. Starting in the late 1950s, Imanishi and his stu-

dents took what they had learned in Japan and went to Africa to study chimpanzees, gorillas and other primates. Through a combination of field observation and experimental work, they verified and advanced much of what they had learned about culture from monkeys in Japan. Thanks to similar work by people like Goodall, Westerners came around to their techniques and findings.

I couldn’t follow their footsteps all the way to Africa, so I went to another island called Yakushima instead. You could fly to Yakushima or take a high-speed ferry, but I chose the most economical option: a 13-hour overnight cargo ship from Kagoshima, a city next to a volcano at the southern tip of Kyushu.



Another organism on Yakushima that arouses great curiosity is the Japanese cedar, because of its antiquity. One specimen is reportedly more than 2,000 years old.

A relationship developed, and the monkeys sometimes groomed and rode the deer.



The island looked foreboding as we pulled into port the next morning, its mountains ringed in mist and rain. Yakushima was famous for its ancient moss and old-growth forests. About 10,000 Japanese macaques also lived on the island—about the same as the human population of around 13,000. The monkeys lived in groups of fewer than 50, and none was provisioned. They foraged for fruit, leaves, acorns and shoots as well as insects and spiders.

“On Yakushima, monkeys love mushrooms,” said Akiko Sawada, a research fellow from Chubu University Academy of Emerging Sciences. The Yakushima monkeys ate more than 60 different varieties, and Sawada was studying if they could smell whether a mushroom was poisonous. She also thought it possible that this was social knowledge, with a young monkey learning which mushrooms to eat and which to avoid by watching its mother and other adults. It was difficult to say if a behavior at Yakushima was cultural or had been learned some other way, like instinct or simple trial and error. All of these processes worked

together to shape a monkey’s life, and in a completely natural setting could not easily be unraveled.

Sawada took me to the quiet western coast of Yakushima, where scientists had habituated several monkey groups. The monkeys were easy to find, as they liked to groom and sunbathe on the road. They hurried out of the way for cars that sped along but barely budged for cars that slowed down. It was also mating season, and males and females paired off to consort at a distance from jealous peers. Sawada pointed out how one of the older monkeys leaned back and looked down her arms when she groomed a partner: Her vision was getting worse.

We followed a large group from the road into the forest. Professor Sugiyama was right: There was less conflict as the monkeys spread out over a wide area to forage. Some cracked acorns with their teeth; others climbed trees for fruit. A young female unrolled curled dead leaves from the forest floor. “I think she’s looking for cocoons,” Sawada said.

Four deer joined us on the hike. They were as small as dogs and nearly as unafraid of people. The monkeys were messy eaters, and deer followed them to pick up their scraps. A relationship developed, and monkeys sometimes groomed and rode the deer. At another research site near Osaka, monkeys sometimes even mounted deer in a rare example of interspecies sex. It’s possible that the deer were gentle partners for small-bodied adolescents who were routinely rejected by the opposite sex or risked physical harm from aggressive adults. “Future observations at this site will indicate whether this group-specific sexual oddity was a short-lived fad or the beginning of a culturally maintained phenomenon,” the researchers there wrote.

That afternoon, Sawada showed me videos of different monkey behaviors she and her colleagues had recorded in the forest. In one, a monkey devoured a giant centipede; in another, a monkey rubbed a caterpillar between her hands to remove its stinging quills before she ate it; in a third, a monkey plucked plump white hornet larvae from a nest. Sawada giggled as she played a video of the monkeys who lived at high altitudes and ate bamboo: They were, for reasons no one really understood, extremely fat.

Later, when I climbed the mountain on my own, there were no bamboo groves or chubby monkeys at the stony peak. I looked down on the canopy of the ancient cedar forest and out across the sea, thinking about what the primatologist Itani had observed—that Japanese culture doesn’t make a strong distinction between people and animals. In the West, culture and science often seem like separate forces, but here they were mutually reinforcing. Science had deciphered macaque culture, and culture had broadened our scientific understanding of the animal world. ♦



A seemingly unimpressed male along Seiburindou Road. Researchers are studying the monkeys’ facial expressions to learn what they really mean.

Craft

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 84

pieces for museums and private clients. He welcomes the creative friction of this process, which brings “new constraints that I wouldn’t have necessarily given myself before, unanticipated challenges that lead to new areas of research and fresh ways of thinking.”

This is one of craft’s significant competitive advantages over industry: its lifeblood still courses through personal transactions, of the sort that once typified all economic exchange, when every suit of clothes and pair of shoes, every shop sign and household door, was made by hand. Of course, customization of that kind drives up cost, and over the course of American history, cheapness has gradually and decisively won out. We have traded personalization for profusion. This is not necessarily a matter of quantity over quality—mass-produced goods can certainly have an excellence—but it has resulted in a pervasive disconnect between the people who make things and the people who buy and use them. Every craftsperson must decide how hard to push back against this; just how bespoke, and hence exclusive, they want their work to be.

Michihiro Matsuda makes acoustic instruments from his shop in Redwood City, California. Originally from Japan, he trained with the renowned Hungarian-born luthier Ervin Somogyi; in those days, Matsuda’s English was poor, and he learned mostly by watching, just as apprentices have done for centuries.

■
The influential Arts and Crafts mode reached a peak in the custom furniture of Frank Lloyd Wright. A circa 1901 chair for a house in Highland Park, Illinois.
L



Now, in a typical year, he makes about seven guitars, each one unique, built in close collaboration with his clients. His waiting list is about three years long.

Chris DiPinto lives and works in Philadelphia and makes solid-body electric guitars. An active musician, he originally started making instruments to suit his own playing style (he’s left-handed, which limited his options for a commercially made guitar). He is self-taught—the first instrument he built for himself was made from salvaged oak floorboards. In his busiest years, he has made 400 guitars, while also completing a lot of repair work on instruments brought to his shop.

Matsuda and DiPinto are a study in contrasts. Matsuda draws inspiration for his exquisite designs from his Japanese background. He has collaborated with maki-e lacquer artists and is known for the distinctive gunpowder finish he sometimes applies to his guitar tops, an adaptation of the traditional scorching that seals the wood of a Japanese koto harp. He also has an avant-garde aspect to his work. His most adventurous guitars resemble Cubist sculptures, with elements deconstructed and shifted from their usual position. The tuning pegboard might end up down at the bottom of the instrument, while the main body is fragmented into floating curves.

DiPinto’s references are more down-to-earth. He loves the classic imported instruments of the 1960s, when the Beatles were big, instruments had sparkle and flash, and kids like him all wanted to be guitar heroes. “To this day,” he says, laughing, “I’m still trying to be a rock star!” Meanwhile, he’s making instruments that other working musicians can afford, using templates, making structural elements and decorative inlays in batches to increase efficiency.

Yet when I described Matsuda’s approach to DiPinto, he exclaimed, “in some ways, I’m just like Michi.” Both still need to consider every design choice in relation to playability and sound, not just looks. And they need to understand their clients. A musician’s identification with an instrument, the physical and psychological connection, is nearly total. So, while DiPinto certainly does have a following—he’s one of the few independent electric guitar makers in the country who has a recognizable brand—he knows that when one of his instruments leaves the shop, it’s no longer about him. Even Matsuda, who makes highly artistic, even spectacular guitars, is clear: “I am not trying to satisfy my ego. I am trying to satisfy my customers.”

THE BROADER POINT IS THAT, while craft may be a brilliant showcase for individual talent, it is ultimately about other people. Even the most elite makers, who devote themselves over long years of solitary work, reflect the communities around them. They have to, for a craftsperson who is not trusted will not stay in business

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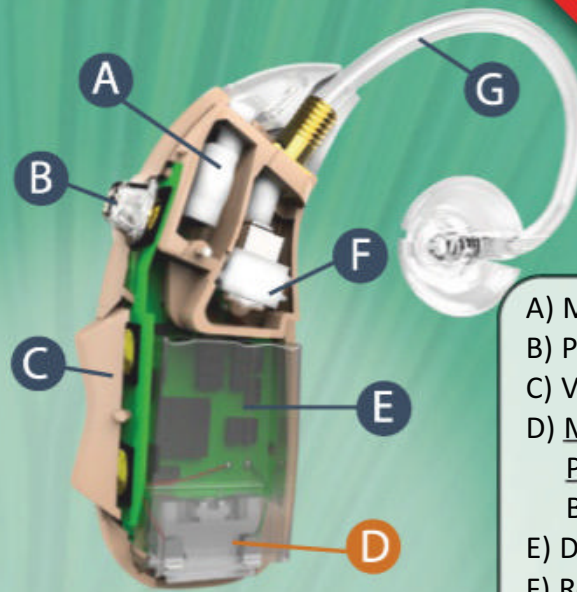
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long. While craft is a quintessential expression of the American spirit of independence, it is also a way to hold people together.

An exemplar of this principle is Chicago's blkHaUS Studios, a joint project between the artist Fodayemi Wilson and the designer Norman Teague. The unusual name is a play on the Bauhaus, the storied German art and design school, which relocated to Chicago when the Nazis shut it down. The name also says that this is a black creative enterprise devoted to the power of the first-person plural. These values play out in the various aspects of the organization's work, which is principally dedicated to hand-building structures in wood and other materials to make public spaces more inviting. They have made gathering spaces in a wildlife reserve; furniture for a community garden; even a festival pavilion for the performer Solange Knowles. Perhaps their best-known undertaking is Back Alley Jazz, inspired by neighborhood jam sessions on Chicago's South Side in the 1960s and '70s. For this project, they assembled teams of musicians, architects and artists, who together devised settings for pop-up performances in parking lots, churches, yards and—yes—back alleys. They are rolling back the years to the days when the city was a manufacturing center.

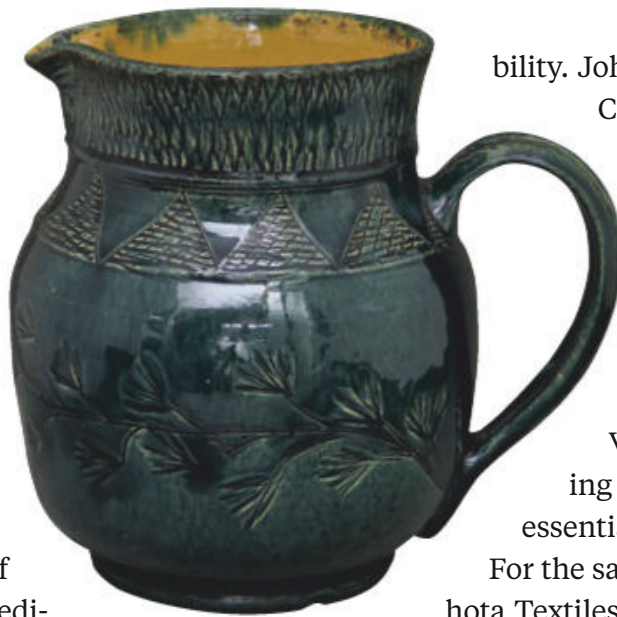
Wilson and Teague are highly accomplished in their respective fields, with busy schedules of exhibitions, writing and teaching. But when they work together as blkHaUS, their separate professional identities recede into the background. They encourage collaborators to

“I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'M DOING A GOOD JOB UNLESS SOMEBODY'S PICKING UP PART OF WHAT I'M PUTTING DOWN.”

take a role in shaping a project's creative vision. Their proudest moment with Back Alley Jazz came three years in, when community members they had been serving simply took over the project. They see this participatory approach as reflecting a specifically black ethic and aesthetic. “The community owns our knowledge,” as Wilson puts it. “If Norman does well, for instance, then everyone owns that well-do-

ne.” Accordingly, every blkHaUS project is an opportunity to teach skills to others, showing how craft and design can build cultural equity. “I don't feel like I'm doing a good job,” Teague says, “unless somebody's picking up part of what I'm putting down.”

Wilson and Teague are not alone in feeling this way. Every maker I spoke to for this article emphasized the importance of passing on skills to others, particularly to the next generation—another way that craft embodies personal vision and public responsi-



A jug by George Ohr of Biloxi, Mississippi, the prolific “mad potter” who was born in 1857 and died obscure at 60 but is now hailed as the “Picasso of art pottery.”

bility. John Lavine, the CTE educator in Daly City, California, makes a strong case that teaching craft instills independence: “Devalue the hand and you devalue our sense of self-worth. But take a kid and teach them how to do something with their hands, you teach them to be a citizen that contributes to our culture.”

Virgil Ortiz sees craft skill as a building block of Cochiti Pueblo culture, as essential as passing on the actual language.

For the same reason Margaret Wheeler, at Mahota Textiles, taught her grandchildren to weave as soon as possible. On one occasion, she remembers, her 9-year-old granddaughter, sitting at the loom at a craft fair, was asked how long she'd been weaving. “Oh,” she replied, “about seven years now.”

Chris DiPinto, who struggled to find anyone to teach him when he was setting out, has at least one person in his guitar shop learning from him at all times, as a matter of principle. Chris Schanck, the furniture designer, says that even the most straightforward commission can be a welcome opportunity to teach methods to new studio members. Matthew Cummings has no illusions about the difficulty of his craft—“it takes about five years not to suck” at glass-blowing, he says—but he loves taking on unskilled trainees, as they have no bad habits to unlearn. And Yohance Joseph Lacour, who began teaching leatherworking almost as soon as he learned it himself, is planning to set up an apprentice program for men and women coming out of prison.

In the end, it's this combination of ambition, diversity and generosity that most distinguishes the current craft renaissance. The headlong confrontation of perspectives that has lately characterized our public conversations seems to leave no common ground. Maybe craft can provide it? For, wherever you go in the U.S., country or city, north or south, red state or blue, you will find makers, and communities of support gathered around them. It's an encouraging idea. Yet we must also recognize that, as Lacour puts it, “craft may have brought us together in the past, but it wasn't a happy union.” Artisanry and inequality have long coexisted.

Here I think of another thing Lacour told me. When he is working with beginning students, he says, he often finds them becoming frustrated, as they try to make their very first shoes—their skills simply aren't up to the task. In these moments, he'll say to them gently, “You realize you do get to make another one, don't you?” The only way to get better is to keep trying. This is the real wisdom of craft: not perfectionism but persistence. And it's a lesson we all can learn. Craft, at its best, preserves the good in what has been handed down, while also shaping the world anew. This is a reminder that a better tomorrow is always in the making. ♦

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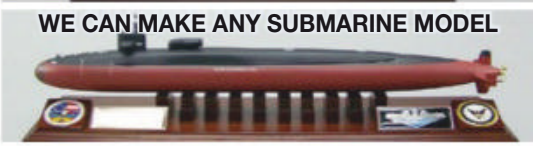
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Yellowstone

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

by the Army, with skirmishes and battles along the way. Angry young warriors had killed a number of whites. The Nez Perce were hoping to find refuge with the Crows in the buffalo country of Wyoming and Montana, or with Sitting Bull in Canada, where they could continue to live their traditional life of hunting and gathering.

Contrary to what was reported in the newspapers at the time and has been taught to American schoolchildren ever since, the leader of the Nez Perce flight was not Chief Joseph. Joseph was a simple camp chief who made no military decisions and took charge of the Nez Perce only during their final surrender. As the great procession of warriors, elders, women, children, dogs and horses passed through Yellowstone, they were led by a half-white buffalo hunter known as Poker Joe. Against his instructions, a group of young warriors ended up looting the Radersburg party's wagons and killing two of the tourists.

In the park today road signs identify where the Nez Perce went next—across the Yellowstone River in the Hayden Valley, then to Yellowstone Lake, and up over what's now called Dead Indian Pass in the northeastern corner of the park. Their old friends the Crows turned them away, so the Nez Perce went north toward Canada but were surrounded by the U.S. military in the Bears Paw Mountains of northern Montana. Joseph, the last chief standing, took over and, according to legend, he made a famous surrender speech: "From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever."

But that was not the end of armed conflict inside the new park. The following year, 1878, a group of Bannock and Shoshone warriors fled into Yellowstone after a violent uprising in Idaho. The same U.S. Cavalry general who had forced the Nez Perce to surrender, Nelson Miles, defeated them within 20 miles of Dead Indian Pass.

To counteract the bad publicity generated by these two "Indian wars," as they were described, park officials launched marketing campaigns that sought to erase the history of Native American presence in the park. Starting in 1886,

the U.S. Cavalry patrolled the park for 32 years, to make tourists feel safer and discourage Native Americans from hunting and gathering in their old haunts.

In MacDonald's opinion, the existence of Yellowstone National Park, and the United States of America, came at a "terrible cost" to Native Americans, and the least we can do today is acknowledge the truth. "When people look at Yellowstone, they should see a landscape rich with Native American history, not a pristine wilderness. They're driving on roads that were Native American trails. They're camping where people camped for thousands of years."

MacDonald has no Native American blood, but he regards the people who lived in Yellowstone for 11,000 years as something like ancestors. "We're all descended from hunter-gatherers who lived in similar ways to the people here," he says. "They were really successful at surviving in difficult conditions. We know this because we're alive. If they hadn't been so resourceful and successful, none of us would be here today."

He would like to see more signs and exhibits about the park's original inhabitants, first and foremost at Obsidian Cliff, but the park service is more concerned about protecting the site from possible looting. Shane Doyle has been advocating for a tepee village inside the park, where tribal college students could teach park visitors about the Native American history. "So far I've got nowhere," Doyle says. "It might take a really long time, but I'm hopeful we'll get there in the end. Surely, they can't just keep pretending we were never there." ♦

Answers from Page 30.

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Joseph Rainey

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67

bravery as well as his political legacy. "He was a courageous man," Lorna says, describing how Rainey once refused to leave a hotel dining room that wouldn't serve him until escorts pushed him down the stairs. "He deliberately put his physical self in harm's way in order to prove a point, and he knew that regardless of what he said—'Oh, I'm a congressman'—that wasn't going to help him. They didn't see 'congressman.' They saw color. So he didn't mind if he was threatened by the KKK, or the Red Shirts. They couldn't stop him from trying to exercise his position to try to help other people."

Unlike Lorna, Representative Clyburn learned little about Rainey's life and career while he was growing up. "No one really talked about Rainey," says Clyburn, who was born in Sumter, South Carolina, in 1940. He began learning more about Rainey once he was elected to Congress, in 1992, representing part of Rainey's former district. Since then, he has become a vocal advocate for remembering Rainey and the whole generation of black Reconstruction politicians. "If people knew this history," Clyburn says, "they would have a better understanding of some of the political challenges we face today."

Clyburn's career has followed a different trajectory from Rainey's. He is serving his 14th term in Congress, where he is the third-highest ranking Democrat. (Through 20th-century black activism, the Democratic Party, which once barred black members throughout the South, became the party of civil rights under President Lyndon Johnson.) From 1999 to 2001, Clyburn chaired the Congressional Black Caucus, founded in 1971.

But while Rainey's own career was obstructed by white supremacists, and ultimately cut short, Clyburn believes that Rainey's story is ultimately one of victory. "People who paved the road often get punished," Clyburn says. "I really believe he smashed through and there emerged a deliberate attempt not to give him the recognition he was due. The people who are first sometimes pay a real big price." ♦

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Q: In North America, we worry about invasive species from other continents. Are there North American species that have become invasive elsewhere?

Ricardo Berry | Socorro, New Mexico

EUROPEANS AND ASIANS dread the Colorado potato beetle, says Floyd Shockley, entomology collections manager at the National Museum of Natural History. The interloper, commonly found in the Rocky Mountains, destroys eggplant, tomato and tobacco plants as well as spuds. The fall armyworm, native to eastern and central North America, spread a few years ago to Africa and then Asia, where it began eating lucrative cash crops like maize and sorghum. And since the late 20th century, the Western corn rootworm, common in Iowa, has been attacking corn plants across Europe. Like the Colorado potato beetle, this pest also causes problems in the U.S., but it's harder to control in Europe and Asia, where farmers use fewer pesticides. Many other American plants and animals, from Vir-

ginia silkweed to Louisiana crawfish, are wreaking havoc abroad.

Q: How do museums transport priceless artifacts without risking theft?

Dennis Svaldi | Arvada, Colorado

IT'S A RIGOROUS process involving a lot of paperwork, risk-based planning and on-the-ground protection, says William Tompkins, the founding director of the Smithsonian's National Collections Program. Earlier in his career, when he was managing numismatic collections at the National Museum of American History, Tompkins was assigned to travel to a conference in New York with priceless coins. He made the trip accompanied by plainclothes security officers. Arriving at the conference, Tompkins was greeted by a handful of security guards who "looked like they worked for the mafia," he recalls. "You could tell they were all carrying weapons." Generally, it's the receiving party's responsibility to foot the bill for all the necessary security precautions.

Q: What is the protocol for adding new stars to the U.S. flag?

Donald Rohlck | Holton, Michigan

IF PUERTO RICO, another territory or the District of Columbia were to gain statehood, the road to a 51-star flag would be wide open, says Jennifer Jones, military history curator at the National Museum of American History. Back in 1919, President Woodrow Wilson established the Heraldic Program Office to approve Army insignia and coats of arms. A restructured version of that program, the Institute of Heraldry, now has designs on deck for flags up to 56 stars. The law states that any new flag shall be unveiled on the next Fourth of July.

Q: I've heard that in the '60s, many American astronauts drove Corvettes. How did that connection happen?

Julia Hamilton | State College, Pennsylvania

IT STARTED IN 1962 when General Motors presented a white Corvette to Alan Shepherd, the first American in space. Then, in a burst of promotional savvy, a Florida Chevrolet dealer named Jim Rathmann negotiated with GM to offer astronauts a \$1-a-year lease on any model in his showroom, says Teasel Muir-Harmony, curator of the Apollo collection at the National Air and Space Museum. Not surprisingly, the rocket men chose the flagship sportscar. Sometimes they even drag-raced on beach roads. ♦

Text by Natalie Hamilton



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